Encounter

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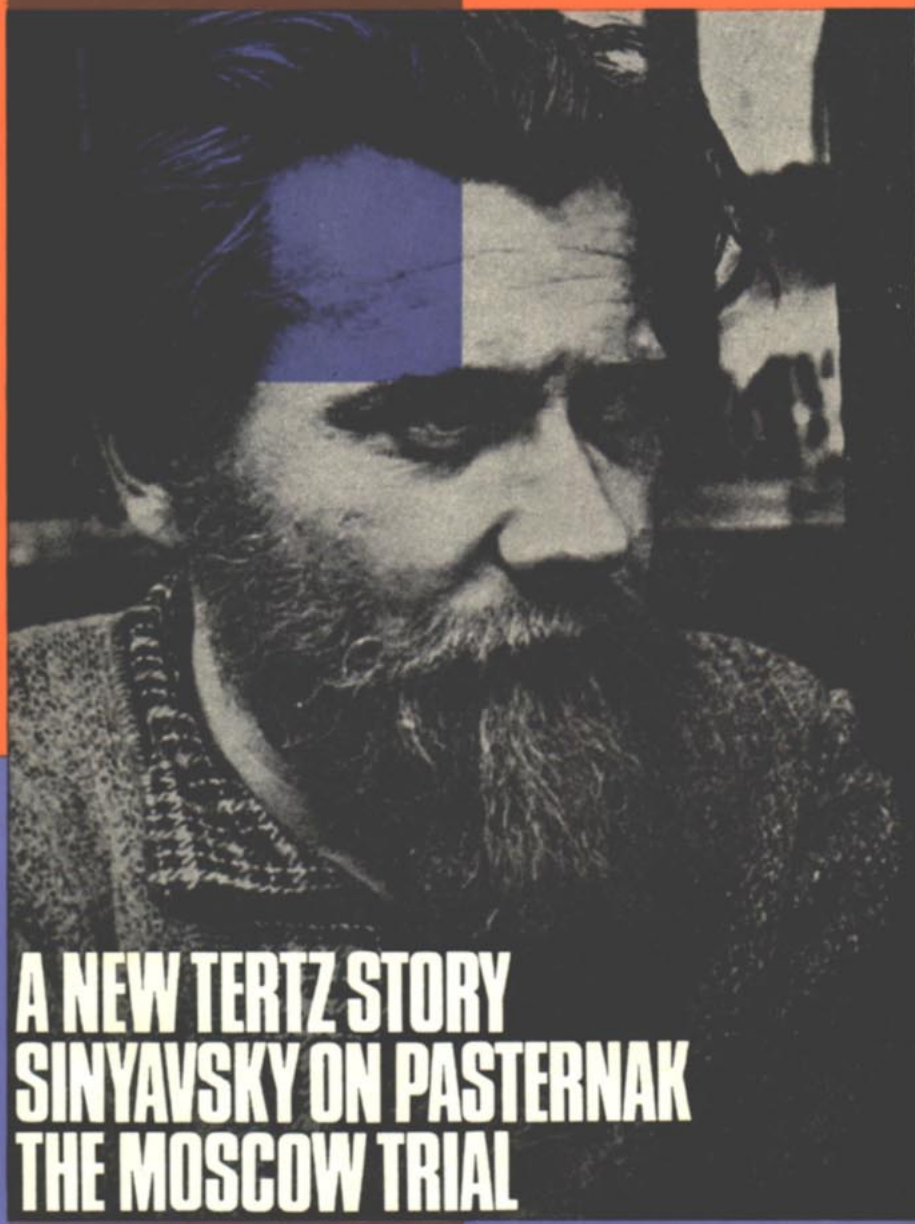

A NEW TERTZ STORY
SINYAVSKY ON PASTERNAK
THE MOSCOW TRIAL

edited by
Melvin J Lasky
& Frank Kermode
April 1966
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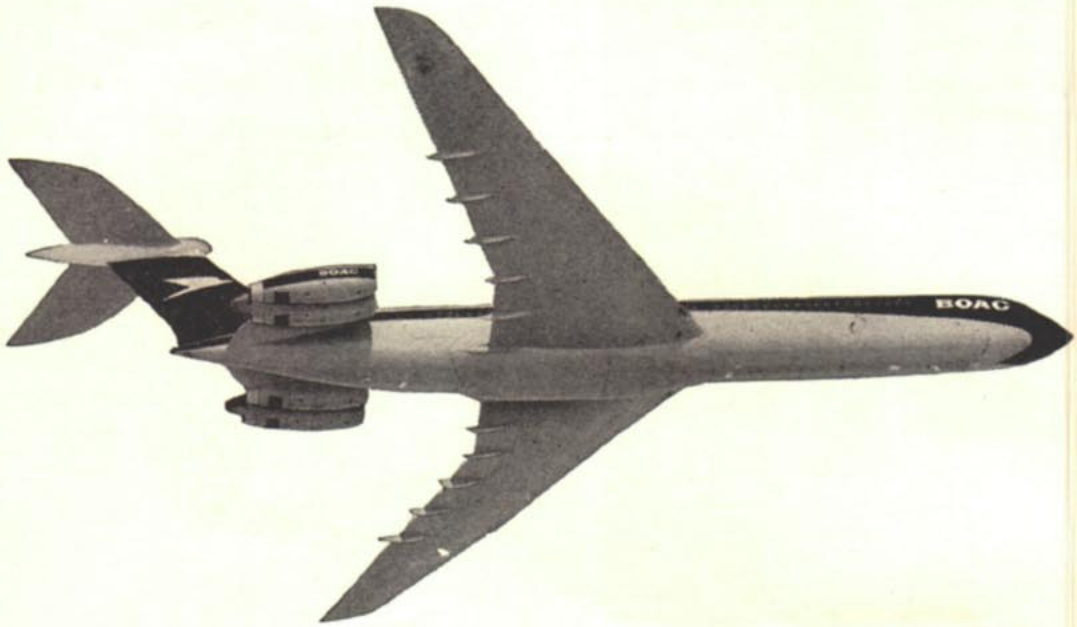

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Encounter

APRIL 1966
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Edited by FRANK KERMODE *and* MELVIN J. LASKY

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Abram Tertz

Pkhentz

A Short Story

I MET him at the laundry again today. He pretended to be completely taken up with his dirty washing and unaware of me.

First came the sheets which people here use for reasons of hygiene. Along one edge of every sheet they stitch in tiny letters the word "FEET." This is by way of precaution against one's lips touching any part which the soles of one's feet may have rubbed and contaminated the night before.

Similarly a kick is considered more insulting than a blow with the hand, and not just because the foot hurts more. The distinction is probably a sign that Christianity still lives on: the foot must be wickeder than the rest of the body for the simple reason that it is farther from heaven. Only the sexual organs are treated with less respect, and here there is some mystery.

Next came pillow-cases with dark impressions in the middle. Then towels, which unlike pillow-cases get dirtier round the edges, and, last of all, a colourful bundle of crumpled personal linen.

At this point he started tossing his stuff in at such a rate that I couldn't take a good look. Either he was afraid of giving away a secret, or else he was ashamed, as people always are, to exhibit objects directly pertaining to his legs.

But it was suspicious, I thought, that he had worn his clothes so long without getting them laundered. Ordinarily hunchbacks are clean. They are afraid that their clothes may make them still more repulsive. But this one, surprisingly, was such a sloven that he wasn't like a hunchback at all.

The woman who checked the laundry had seen everything. The marks left by the rarest of juices were old acquaintances to her. But even she couldn't help saying quite loudly: "What are you shoving it under my nose for, citizen? If you can't hand your laundry in properly, wash it yourself!"

He paid his money without a word and rushed out. I didn't follow him, because I didn't want to attract attention.

AT HOME things were as usual. The minute I got into my room Verochka appeared. She bashfully suggested that we should have supper together. It was a bit awkward for me to say no to the girl. She's the only one in the apartment who treats me decently. It's a pity that her sympathy is grounded in sexual attraction. I'm absolutely convinced of this after what happened today.

"How's Kostritskaya?," I asked, steering the conversation on to common enemies.

"Oh, Andrei Kazimirovich, she's been making threats again."

"What's wrong?"

"The same as before. Light on in the

ABRAM TERTZ's *first stories—"The Trial Begins" and "The Icicle"—were published in* ENCOUNTER *(January 1960 and February 1962). He is, of course, the Russian literary critic Andrei Sinyavsky who has, despite world-wide protests and appeals, recently been sentenced by a Moscow court to seven years' hard labour. Sinyavsky's essay on Boris Pasternak is published in this number (p. 45) as well as a documentary account of the Moscow trial (p. 82).*

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bathroom and the floor all splashed. Kostritskaya informed me that she's going to complain to the superintendent."

The news infuriated me. I make less use of the plumbing than any of the others. I hardly ever go into the kitchen. Can't I make up for it by using the bathroom?

"Well, let her get on with it," I answered sharply. "She burns light by the kilowatt herself. And her children broke my bottle. Let the superintendent come."

But I knew very well that an appeal to the authorities would be a very risky business for me. Why draw attention to myself unnecessarily?

"Don't upset yourself, Andrei Kazimirovich," said Verochka. "I'll look after any trouble with the neighbours. Please don't upset yourself."

She put out her hand to touch my forehead, but I managed to dodge. "No, no, I'm quite well, I haven't got a temperature. Let's have supper."

Food stood on the table, steaming and stinking. The sadism of cookery has always amazed me. Would-be chickens are eaten in liquid form. The innards of pigs are stuffed with their own flesh. A gut that's swallowed itself garnished with stillborn chickens—what else when you think of it is scrambled egg with sausage?

Wheat is treated more unmercifully still: they cut it, beat it, crush it to dust.

"EAT UP NOW, Andrei Kazimirovich," said Verochka coaxingly. "Please don't let it worry you. I'll take the blame for everything."

What about preparing a man to the same recipe? Take an engineer or writer, stuff him with his own brains, place a violet in one braised nostril, and dish him up to his colleagues for dinner. Yes, the torments of Christ, Jan Hus, and Stenka Razin are a bagatelle compared with the agonies of a fish jerked out of water on a hook. They at least knew what it was all for.

"Tell me, Andrei Kazimirovich, are you very lonely," asked Verochka, coming back with the tea-pot. When she had gone to fetch it I emptied my plate into a sheet of newspaper.

"Did you ever have any friends"—she put in sugar—"or children"—another spoonful—"or a woman you loved?"... stir, stir, stir.

It was easy to see that Verochka was agitated.

"You are all the friends I need," I answered cautiously. "And as for women, you can see for yourself: I'm old and hump-backed. Old and hump-backed," I repeated with ruthless insistence.

I honestly wanted to forestall a declaration of love: things were difficult enough without it. It wasn't worth rousing this unattached girl to a keener interest in myself, and spoiling our alliance against the spiteful neighbours.

To avoid trouble I thought of pretending to be an alcoholic. Or a criminal. Or perhaps better still a madman, or even a pederast? But I was afraid that any one of these roles would lend my person a dangerous fascination.

All I could do was to dwell on my hump, my age, my wretched salary, my humble job as a book-keeper, and all the time it took up, to insist that only a woman with a hump to match would be right for me, whereas a normal, beautiful woman needed a symmetrical man.

"No, you are too noble," Verochka decided. "You think of yourself as a cripple, and you're afraid of being a burden. Don't think it's pity on my part. It's just that I like cactus, and you are like a cactus. What a lot of them you've got growing there on your window-sill!"

Her hot fingers touched my hand. I jumped as if I'd been scalded.

"You're freezing—are you ill?" asked Verochka anxiously. She was puzzled by my body temperature.

This was too much. I pleaded a migraine and asked her to leave me.

"Till tomorrow," said Verochka, waving her hand like a little girl. "And you can give me a cactus for a present tomorrow. I know you will."

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This gentle girl talked to me like a bookkeeper in charge. She declared her love for me and demanded a reward.

Didn't I read somewhere that people in love are like humble slaves? Nothing of the kind. A man only has to fall in love to feel himself lord and master, with the right to boss anyone who doesn't love him enough. How I wish that nobody loved me!

When I was alone I set about watering my cacti from an enamel mug. I fed them slowly, my little hump-backed children, and relaxed.

It was two o'clock in the morning, and I was faint from hunger, when I crept on tiptoe along the dark corridor to the bathroom. But what a splendid supper I had then!

It isn't at all easy, eating only once a day.

THAT WAS two weeks ago. Since then Verochka has informed me that she has two beaus: a lieutenant and an actor at the Stanislavsky Theatre. But it hasn't stopped her showing her predilection for me. She has threatened to shave her head so that I can't keep saying how stupid it would be to sacrifice her beauty to an old freak. Now she has got round to spying on me, lying in wait for me on the way to the bathroom.

"Cleanliness makes hunchbacks handsome"—that's my stock answer when she keeps asking why I take so many baths.

Just in case, I have started blocking up the frosted window between the bathroom and the lavatory with a piece of ply-wood. I always try the bolts before undressing. I couldn't stand the thought of somebody watching me.

Yesterday morning I wanted to fill my fountain-pen, to continue my irregular diary, so I knocked at her door. Verochka wasn't up yet. She was reading *The Three Musketeers* in bed.

"Good morning," I said politely. "You'll be late for your lecture."

She closed her book. "Do you know," she said, "that the whole house thinks I'm your mistress?"

I said nothing, and then something horrible happened. Verochka, her eyes flashing, threw back the counterpane, and her whole body, completely uncovered, stared up at me angrily. "Look what you've turned down, Andrei Kazimirovich!"

Fifteen years ago I came across a textbook on anatomy. I wanted to know what was what, so I studied carefully all the pictures and diagrams. Later on, I had an opportunity of watching little boys bathing in the river at the Gorky Park of Culture and Rest. But, as it happened, I had never seen a naked woman in the flesh and at such close quarters.

It was—I repeat—horrible. I found that her whole body was of the same unnatural whiteness as her neck, face, and hands. A pair of white breasts dangled in front. At first I took them for secondary arms, amputated above the elbow. But each of them terminated in a round nipple like a push-button.

Farther on, and right down to her legs, the whole available space was occupied by a spherical belly. That is where the food swallowed in the course of a day collects in a single heap. Its lower half was over-grown with curly hair like a little head.

The problem of sex, which plays such a major role in their intellectual and moral life, had long troubled me. For safety's sake, I suppose, it has been wrapped from ancient times in a veil of impenetrable secrecy. Even the textbook on anatomy has nothing to say on the subject, or says it so vaguely and cursorily that no one can guess what it truly means.

So now, overcoming my confusion, I decided to take advantage of the opportunity, to take a look at the place mentioned in the anatomy textbook as the site of that genital apparatus which shoots out ready-made infants like a catapult.

I caught a glimpse of something resembling human features. Only it didn't look female to me, but more like an old man's face, unshaven and grinning.

A hungry, angry man dwelt there between her legs. He probably snored at night, and relieved his boredom with foul language. This must explain woman's dual nature, of which the poet Lermontov has aptly said:

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Fair as an angel of heaven,
As a fiend cruel and false.

There was no time to work the thing out, because Verochka suddenly shuddered and said:

"Come on!"

She shut her eyes and opened her mouth, like a fish pulled out of water. She thrashed about on the bed like a great white fish, helplessly, vainly, and bluish goose-pimples covered her body.

"Forgive me, Verochka Grigorievna," I said timidly. "Forgive me," I said, "it's time for me to go to the office."

And I tried to tread lightly and not to look back as I went away.

IT WAS RAINING outside, but I was in no hurry. It was cleaning day in the department. I had escaped from Verochka, pleading official business (the estimates, the nicotine, Head Book-keeper Zykov, those crazy typists—all for 650 roubles a month), and now I could afford the great luxury of a walk in the open in wet weather.

I found a leaky drain-pipe and stationed myself under the stream. It ran right down my neck, cool and delicious, and in about three minutes I was damp enough.

The people hurrying past, all of them with umbrellas and rubber soles, looked at me sideways, intrigued by my behaviour. I had to change my position, so I took a stroll through the puddles. My shoes were letting in nicely. Down below, at least, I was enjoying myself.

"Oh Verochka, Verochka," I repeated indignantly. "Why were you so cruel as to fall in love with me? Why weren't you just the least bit ashamed of your exterior, why did you behave with such ruthless candour?"

Shame, after all, is man's fundamental virtue. It is a dim realisation that he is irredeemably ugly, an instinctive dread of what he hides under cloth. Only shame, shame, shame can lend them a certain nobility, make them not of course more beautiful but at least more modest.

Needless to say, when I got here I followed the general fashion. You must observe the laws of the country you're compelled to live in. And anyway the constant danger of being caught, of being found out made me force my body into this fancy-dress.

But in their place I wouldn't shed my fur coat, let alone my suit, not even at night. I would find a plastic surgeon to shorten my legs and at least put a hump on my back. Hunchbacks are certainly a bit better-looking than the rest of them here, though they are monsters too.

Dejectedly I made my way to Herzen Street. My hunchback lodged there in a semi-basement opposite the Conservatoire. For six weeks now I had my eye on this gracefully vaulted person who was so unlike a human being, and reminded me somehow of my lost youth.

I had seen him three times at the laundry and once in a flower-shop, buying a cactus. I had been lucky enough to find out his address from a receipt which he had tendered to the laundress.

The time had come to dot the *i*'s.

I TOLD MYSELF that it was impossible, that they had all perished and that I was the sole survivor, like Robinson Crusoe. Why, I had liquidated, with my own hands, all that was left after the crash. There was nobody here but me.

But what if they'd sent him to look for me? Pretending to be a hunchback, in disguise.... They hadn't forgotten me! They'd realised what had happened and mounted a search!

But how could they know? After thirty-two years. By local time, but still. Alive and well. That was still something.

But why here precisely? That was the question. Nobody had meant to come here. Quite a different direction. It couldn't happen. We missed our way. Back of beyond. Seven and a half months. Then it happened.

Perhaps it was accidental. Exactly the same trajectory. A deviation from course and the winter time-table. Finish up anywhere. Do coincidences happen? Alike as two peas. Where none had set foot. It can happen, can't it? Disguised as a hunchback. Exactly like

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me. If there were just one other exactly like me!

The door was opened by a lady like Kostritskaya. Only his Kostritskaya was bigger and older. She exuded a smell of lilac, ten times normal strength. Perfume, that was.

"Leopold will be back soon. Come in, please."

An unseen dog was barking at the other end of the corridor. It couldn't make up its mind to spring at me. But I had had nasty experiences with animals of this kind.

"What's wrong? She won't bite. Down, Niksa, quiet!"

We wrangled politely while the animal raged, and three heads emerged from side doors. They looked me up and down with interest and cursed the dog. The din was awful.

I got through to the room, at great risk, and found there a small child armed with a sabre. When he saw us he asked for berries and sugar and set up a yell, wriggling and pulling faces.

"He's a sweet-tooth. Just like me," Kostritskaya explained. "Stop whining, or this uncle will eat you."

To please my hostess, I said jokingly that for soup I drank children's blood, warmed-up. The child was quiet at once. He dropped his sabre and cowered in the far corner. He didn't take his eyes off me. They were full of animal terror.

"Is he like Leopold?" the Kostritskaya asked, as though casually, but with a hoarse tenderness in her voice.

I pretended to believe the innuendo. The stale air, laced with the exhalations of lilac, made me feel sick. The smell irritated my skin, and a rash broke out in several places. I was afraid that my face might come out in green spots.

I could hear the savage Niksa scratching the corridor floor with her claws, and sniffing my tracks with a noisy snuffle. The excited lady lodgers, unaware of my heightened aural sensitivity, were conversing in half-whispers.

"Anybody can see he's Leopold Sergeevich's brother. . . ."

"No, you're wrong, our hunchy is Pushkin's twin compared to this one."

"Hope to God I never dream of anything like that. . . ."

"Makes you feel funny just to look at him. . . ."

All this was interrupted by Leopold's arrival. I remember that I liked the way he plunged straight into his part—the classic part of the hunchback who meets a monster like himself in the presence of third parties.

"Aha, a companion in misfortune! With whom have I the honour. . . . To what am I indebted. . . ."

He was copying a psychological pattern as fine-spun as a spider's web, pride protected by self-mockery, shame hiding itself in buffoonery. He mounted his chair like a horseman, gripping the seat between his legs, jumping up and sitting down again back to front, resting his head on the chair-back, pulling weird faces, and continually shrugging his shoulders as though feeling the hump that loomed over him like a ruck-sack.

"Yes, yes. So you're Andrei Kazimirovich. And my name, funnily enough, is Leopold Sergeevich. As you can see I'm a bit of a hunchback too."

I was delighted with this skilful caricature of humanity, this art which was all the more natural because it was so absurd, and I realised rather sadly that he was my superior at the game of living, that I lacked his ability to enter into the only form of being possible for us on earth . . . that of hunchbacked monsters and injured egotists.

But business is business, and I gave him to understand that I wished to talk to him—*confidentially*.

"I don't mind going," said Kostritskaya huffily, and gave me a farewell gust of her caustic aroma as she left the room.

I revenged myself with the thought that she was saturated through and through in this smell. Even her excrement must smell of perfume, instead of boiled potatoes and home comforts, as is usually the case. She must piss pure eau-de-Cologne. In this atmosphere poor Leopold would soon start stinking too.

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When we were alone, except for the petrified child sitting in the far corner with a dazed look of horror and mystification on his face, I asked him straight out:

"How long since you left?"

"Left where?" he answered evasively.

Our hostess' departure had wiped the assumed merriment from his face. Not a trace of that clownish exhibitionism found in most hunchbacks, who are clever enough to hide their spines and proud enough not to suffer because of it. I thought that he hadn't pulled himself together yet, and that from inertia he was wearily keeping up the pretence of being something other than his true self.

"Cut it out," I said quietly. "I recognised you at first sight. You and I come from the same place. We're relatives, so to speak. PKHENTZ! PKHENTZ!" I whispered, to remind him of a name sacred to us both.

"What did you say? ... You know, I thought there was something rather familiar about you. Where could I have seen you before?"

He rubbed his brow, frowned, twisted his lips. The mobility of his face was almost human, and again I envied his extraordinary rehearsal technique, although these cautious antics were beginning to irritate me.

"Of course!" he exclaimed. "Didn't you work once in the Stationery Supplies set-up? The director there in 'forty-four was Yakov Solomonovich Zak—such a nice little Jew. ..."

"I don't know any Zak," I answered curtly. "But I know very well that you, Leopold Sergeevich, are not Leopold Sergeevich at all, and no hunchback, although you keep flourishing your hump all over the place. We've had enough of pretences now. After all, I'm taking just as big a chance as you are."

It was as though the devil had got into him:

"How dare you tell me who I am? Spoiling my relations with the landlady, and then insulting me as well! Go and find yourself a gorgeous woman like that," he said, "and then you can discuss my physical defects. You're more of a hunchback than I am! You're more disgusting. Monster! Hunchback! Wretched cripple!"

Suddenly he burst out laughing and clapped his hand to his head: "Now I remember! I've seen you at the laundry. The only resemblance between us is that we get our clothes washed in the same place."

This time I didn't doubt his sincerity. He really did think that he was Leopold Sergeevich. He had entered too fully into his part, gone native, become human, over-adjusted to his surroundings, surrendered to alien influences. He had forgotten his former name, betrayed his distant homeland, and unless somebody helped him he was as good as lost.

I grabbed him by his shoulders and shook him carefully. I shook him, and implored him in a gentle, friendly way to remember, to make an effort and remember, to return to his true self. What did he want with that Kostritskaya, who oozed such a poisonous odour? Even among humans bestialism was not respectable. And besides, betrayal of the homeland, even without malice aforethought, even out of ordinary forgetfulness. ...

"PKHENTZ! PKHENTZ!" I said over and over again, and repeated other words which I still remembered.

Suddenly an inexplicable warmth reached me through his Boston jacket. His shoulders were getting hotter and hotter, as hot as Verochka's hand, and thousands of other hot hands which I have preferred not to shake in greeting.

"Forgive me," I said, relaxing my hold. "I think there's some mistake. A regrettable misunderstanding. You see, I—how can I explain to you?—I'm subject to nervous attacks. ..."

Just then I heard a terrible row and turned round. The child was dancing about behind me, at a respectful distance, and threatening me with his sabre.

"Let Leopold alone!" he shouted. "Nasty man! Let Leopold alone! My mommy loves him. He's my daddy, he's my Leopold, not yours!"

There could be no doubt about it. I had

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mistaken my man. He was a normal human, the most normal of humans, hunchback or not.

I FEEL worse every day. Winter has arrived —the coldest season in this part of the world. I never put my nose out of the house.

Still, it's a sin to grumble. I retired on pension after the November holiday. I don't get much, but it's less worrying this way. How should I have managed otherwise during my last illness? I shouldn't have had the strength to dash to the office, and getting a doctor's note would have been awkward and dangerous. I wasn't going to submit to medical examination in my old age. It would have been the end of me.

Sometimes I ask myself a tricky question: why shouldn't I, after all, legalise my position? Why have I spent thirty years pretending to be somebody else, like a criminal? *Andrei Kazimirovich Sushinski. Half-Polish, half-Russian. Aged 61. Deformed. Not a Party member. Bachelor. No relatives, no children. Never been abroad. Born at Irkutsk. Father: clerk. Mother: housewife. Both died of cholera in 1901.* And that's it!

But what about going to the police, apologising, and telling the whole story simply, explaining it all just as it happened?

Well then, I'd say, it's like this. You can see for yourselves—I'm a creature from another world. Not from Africa or India, not even from Mars or one of your Venuses, but from somewhere still more remote and inaccessible. You don't even have names for such places, and if you spread out all the star maps and charts in existence before me, I honestly couldn't show you where that splendid star, my birthplace, has got to.

In the first place, I'm not an expert on astronomical matters. I went where I was taken. And in the second place, the picture's quite different, I can't recognise my native skies from your books and maps and things. Even now, I go out into the street at night, look up and there it is again—all wrong. I don't even know in which direction to yearn. It may be that not even my sun, let alone my earth, can be seen from here. It may be one of those on the other side of the galaxy. I can't work it out.

Please don't think that I came here with some ulterior motive. Migration of peoples, war of the worlds, and all that rot. Anyway, I'm not a military man, nor a scientist, nor an explorer. Book-keeping is my profession—my profession here, that is. What I did before is best not mentioned. You wouldn't understand if I did.

In fact we had no intention of flying into space. To put it crudely we were going to a holiday resort. Then, on the way, something occurred—let's say it was a meteorite to make it easier for you—well then, we lost buoyancy and down we fell, into the unknown, for seven and a half months we went on falling —our months though, not yours—and by pure chance we landed up here.

When I came to and looked around—all my fellow-travellers were dead. I buried them in the prescribed way, and started trying to adapt myself.

Everything around was exotic and unfathomable. A moon was burning in the sky, huge and yellow—but in the singular. The air was wrong, the light was wrong, and all the gravities and pressures were strange. What can I say? The most elementary pine-tree affected my other-worldly senses as a porcupine affects you.

Where could I go? I had to eat and drink. Of course, I'm not a man and not an animal; I incline more to the vegetable kingdom than to anything else you have here; but I too have my basic needs. The first thing I need is water, for want of a better form of moisture, and preferably at a certain temperature, and now and then I want the missing salts added to my water. And besides I felt a growing chill in the surrounding atmosphere. I don't have to tell you what Siberian frosts are like.

There was nothing for it, I had to leave the forest. For some days past I'd been looking at people from behind the bushes, sizing them up. I realised at once that they were rational beasts; but I was afraid to begin with that they might eat me. I draped myself in a bunch of rags (this was my first theft, and it

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was pardonable in the circumstances) and came out of the bushes with a look of friendship written all over me.

THE YAKUTS are a trusting and hospitable people. It was from them that I acquired the simplest human habits. Then I made my way to more civilised regions. I learnt the language, obtained an education, and taught arithmetic in a secondary school in the town of Irkutsk. I resided in the Crimea for a time, but soon left because of the climate: it's oppressively hot in summer, and not warm enough in winter, so that you still need a room with radiators, and conveniences of that sort weren't too common there in the 'twenties and cost a lot of money, more than I could manage. So I made my home in Moscow, and I've been here ever since.

IF I WERE to tell this sad tale, no matter to whom, no matter how skilfully edited for the general reader, nobody would believe me, not at any price. If I could only cry as my story requires. But though I've learnt to laugh after a fashion I don't know how to weep. They'd think I was a madman, a phantasist, and what's more they might put me on trial for having a false passport, forging signatures and stamps, and other illegal activities.

And if, against all reason, they did believe me it would be worse still.

Academics from all the academies everywhere would flock in—astronomers, agronomists, physicists, economists, geologists, philologists, psychologists, biologists, microbiologists, chemists and biochemists, to study me down to the last spot on my body, omitting nothing. They would be for ever questioning, interrogating, examining, extracting.

Theses, films, and poems about me would circulate in millions of copies. Ladies would start wearing green lip-stick and having their hats made to look like cactus, or failing that like rubber-plants. For years to come all hunchbacks would enjoy enormous success with women.

Motor-cars would be called after my homeland, and after me hundreds of new-born infants, as well as streets and dogs. I should become as famous as Leo Tolstoy, or Gulliver, or Hercules. Or Galileo Galilei.

But in spite of this universal interest in my humble person nobody would understand a thing. How could they understand me, when I myself am quite unable to express my inhuman nature in their language. I beat about the bush and try to make some headway with metaphors, but when it comes to the point I can find nothing to say. I can only see a short, solid GOGRY, hear a rapid VZGLYAGU, and an indescribably beautiful PKHENTZ beams down upon my trunk. Fewer and fewer such words remain in my memory. I can convey their structure only approximately in human speech. If I were surrounded by linguists asking "what do you call this" I could only shrug my shoulders and say: GOGRY TUZHROSKMI.

No, I'd better put up with living lonely and incognito. If anything as special as me turns up it should exist unnoticed. And die unnoticed.

But then, when I die they may put me in a glass jar, pickle me in alcohol, and exhibit me in a Natural History Museum. And the people filing past will shiver with dismay and laugh insultingly to cheer themselves up, and say with a moue of disgust: "Heavens, how abnormal, what an ugly freak!"

I'm not a freak, I tell you! Just because I'm different do you have to be rude? It's no good measuring my beauty against your own hideousness. I'm handsomer than you, and more normal. Every time I look at myself I have the evidence of my own eyes for it.

JUST BEFORE I fell ill the bath was cracked. I found out about it late one evening and realised that Kostritskaya had done it to vex me. I couldn't expect any help from poor Verochka. Verochka had been offended with me ever since the occasion when she offered me what was, humanly speaking, her most valuable possession, and I'd gone for a walk instead.

She has married the actor from the Stanislavsky, and sometimes the sound of their ethereal kisses wings to my ears through the

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thin wall. I was genuinely glad, for her sake, and on their wedding-day I went so far as to send them an anonymous cake, with her initials and some arabesques executed in chocolate.

But I'm incredibly hungry, and Kostritskaya has damaged the bath to destroy me, and, pending repairs, the hole where the water runs out has been stopped up with a wooden bung, and the water's turned off. So when everybody had gone to bed and I could hear snores from the floor above and the floor below and all the rooms either side, I took Verochka's wash-tub off its nail in the lavatory, where it hangs with all the neighbours' tubs. It banged like thunder as I dragged it along the corridor, and somebody downstairs stopped snoring. But I finished the job, boiled a kettle in the kitchen, drew a bucketful of cold water, carried the lot into my room, bolted the door and stuck the key in the key-hole.

What pleasure it gave me to throw off my clothes, remove my wig, tear off my genuine India-rubber ears, and unbuckle the straps which constrict my back and chest. My body opened out like a potted palm brought home from the shop in wrapping paper. All the limbs which had grown numb in the course of the day came to tingling life.

I installed myself in the tub, seized a sponge in one hand to squeeze water over all the dry places, and held the kettle in my second hand. With my third hand I grasped a mug of cold water, added some hot to it, and tried it with my fourth and last remaining hand to see that it wasn't too hot. What comfort!

My skin freely absorbed the precious fluid pouring down on me from the enamel mug, and when the first pangs of hunger were allayed I decided to inspect myself closely, and wash off the unhealthy slime which had seeped out of my pores and congealed in some places in dry mauve clots. True, the eyes in my hands and feet, on the crown of my head and the nape of my neck were getting appreciably dimmer, from being covered up in the day time by rough clothes and false hair. The friction of my right shoe had cost me the sight of one eye back in 1934. It wasn't easy to carry out a really thorough inspection.

But I swivelled my head, not limiting myself to a half-circle—the miserable 180 degrees allotted to the human neck—I blinked simultaneously all the eyes which were still intact, driving away fatigue and darkness, and I succeeded in viewing myself on all sides and from several different angles at once. What a fascinating sight it is, and what a pity that it is only accessible to me in the all-too-short hours of night. I only have to raise my hand and I can see myself from the ceiling, soaring and hovering over myself as it were. And at the same time I keep in view my lower parts, my back, my front, all the spreading branches of my body. If I hadn't been living in exile for thirty-two years I should probably never dream of admiring my exterior. But here I am the only example of that lost harmony and beauty which I call my homeland. What is there for me to do on this earth except delight in my person?

Yes, my rear hand is twisted by its permanent duty of representing a human hump. Yes, my fore hand is so maimed by the straps that two fingers have withered, and my old body has lost its former suppleness. I'm still beautiful for all that! Proportionate! Elegant! Whatever envious carpers may say.

These were my thoughts as I watered myself from the enamel mug, on the night when Kostritskaya took it into her head to murder me by means of a cracked bath. But by morning I was ill. I must have caught cold in the tub. The worst time in my life had begun.

For a week and a half I lay on my hard couch and felt myself drying up. I hadn't the strength to go along to the kitchen for water. My body, a tightly swaddled anthropoid sack, grew numb and inert. My desiccated skin cracked. I couldn't raise myself to slacken my wire-sharp bonds.

A week and a half went by and nobody came in.

I could imagine my neighbours joyfully ringing up the health centre when I was dead. The district medical officer would come to certify the fatal outcome, would bend over

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my couch, cut open my clothing, my bandages and my straps with his surgical scissors, recoil in horror and give orders for my corpse to be delivered to the biggest and best of dissecting theatres as soon as possible.

Here it came—the jar of spirit, caustic as Kostritskaya's perfume! Into the toxic jar, into a glassy dungeon, into history—for the edification of posterity to the end of time they would plunge me, the monster, the greatest monster on earth.

I started groaning, quietly at first, then louder and louder, in hateful and indispensable human language. "Mama, mama, mama," I groaned, imitating the intonation of a tearful child and hoping to awaken the pity of anybody who heard me. And in those two hours, while I was calling for help, I vowed that if I lived I would keep my secret to the end, and not let this last lump of my homeland, this beautiful body, fall into the hands of my enemies for them to rend and mock it.

Verochka came in. She had obviously lost weight, and her eyes, purged of love and resentment, were serene and indifferent.

"Water!" I croaked.

"If you're ill," said Verochka, " you ought to get undressed and take your temperature. I'll call the doctor. They'll bleed you."

The doctor! Bleed me! Get undressed! Next she'd be touching my forehead, which was as cool as the air in the room, and feeling for my non-existent pulse with her red-hot fingers. But Verochka only straightened the pillow, and snatched her hand away in disgust when it came into contact with my wig. Evidently my body only revolted her, like all other humans.

"Water! Water for Christ's sake!"

"Do you want it out of the tap or boiled?"

In the end she went out and came back with a decanter. She polished a dusty tumbler with such a pensive and leisurely air that I should have thought she was taking her revenge on me if I hadn't known that she knew nothing.

"You know, Andrei Kazimirovich, I really did love you. I realise that I loved you—how shall I put it—out of pity. . . . Pity for a lonely, crippled human being, if you will forgive my frankness. But I loved you so much . . . didn't notice . . . physical blemishes. . . . To me you were the handsomest man on earth, Andrei Kazimirovich . . . the most . . . man. And when you laughed at me so cruelly . . . make an end of myself . . . loved . . . won't conceal from you . . . worthy man. . . . Fell in love . . . man . . . human . . . humanity . . . man to man. . . .

"Verochka Grigorievna" I interrupted, unable to bear it any longer, "Please hurry. Water. . . ."

"Human . . .manhu . . . hanumanu. . . . Human . . . manhu . . . umanu . . . hanumanu . . . human. . . ."

"Water! Water!"

Verochka filled the tumbler and suddenly raised it right to my mouth. My false teeth rattled on the glass, but I couldn't bring myself to take the liquid internally. I need watering from above, like a flower or an apple-tree, not through my mouth.

"Drink, drink!" Verochka urged me. "I thought you wanted water. . . ."

I pushed her off and struggled up into a sitting position, feeling like death. Water ran out of my mouth on to the couch. I managed to put out my hand and catch a few drops.

"Give me the flask and go away," I ordered with all the firmness I could muster. "Leave me in peace! I'll drink it myself."

Slow tears trickled from Verochka's eyes.

"Why do you hate me,?" she asked. "What have I done to you? You were the one who didn't want my love, who rejected my pity. . . . You're just vicious and nasty, Andrei Kazimirovich, you're a very bad man."

"Verochka, if you have so much as a grain of pity left in you, go away, I beg you, I implore you, go away, leave me alone."

She went out dejectedly. Then I unbuttoned my shirt and stuck the flask inside it, neck downwards.

NATURE is all scurry and bustle. Everything is in a fever of excitement. Leaves come out hurriedly. Sparrows sing in broken snatches. Children hurry off to their

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exams. Outside the voices of nannies are shrill and hysterical. The air has a tang in it. The Kostritskaya smell—in a low concentration—is all-pervading. Even the cacti on my window-sill have a lemony aroma in the mornings. I mustn't forget to give Verochka a present of them before I leave.

I'm afraid my last illness has done for me. It hasn't just wrecked my body, it's crippled me spiritually as well. Strange desires come upon me at times. I feel an urge to go to the pictures. Or else I think I should like a game of draughts with Grigorievna's husband. He's said to be a first-class chess player.

I re-read my notes, and wasn't happy about them. The influence of an alien *milieu* is felt in every sentence. What good to anybody is this idle chatter in a local dialect? Another thing I mustn't forget before I leave—to burn them. I've no intention of showing them to people. And my lot will never read them or hear anything about me. They'll never fly such an unearthly distance to this outlandish place.

It's getting harder and harder for me to recall the past. Only a few words of my native tongue have survived. I've even forgotten how to think as I used to, let alone read or write. I remember something beautiful, but what exactly it was I don't know.

Sometimes I fancy that I left children behind at home. Ever such bonny little cacti. They must be quite big now. Vasya's going to school. What am I saying, school! He must be a sturdy adult. He's gone in for engineering. And Masha is married.

Lord, oh Lord! I seem to be turning into a man!

No, it wasn't for this that I stood thirty-two years of suffering, and lay on a hard couch without water last winter. The only reason I got better was so that I could go and hide in some quiet spot and die without causing a sensation. That's the only way I can preserve what is left of me.

Everything is ready for my departure: my ticket and seat-reservation to Irkutsk, my can for water, a decent sum of money. I've got practically my whole pension for the winter on my savings book. I didn't spend anything on a fur coat, nor on trams or trolley-buses. I didn't go to the pictures once in all that time. And I gave up paying rent three months ago now. I've got 1,657 roubles altogether.

The day after tomorrow, when everybody's gone to bed, I shall leave the house unnoticed and take a taxi to the station. A hoot of the whistle—and that's the last you'll see of me. Forests, forests as green as my mother's body, will take me in and hide me.

I'll make it somehow or other. For part of the way I'll hire a boat. It's about 350 kilometres. And all by river. Water right beside me. Drench myself three times a day if I want to.

There was a hole. I'll search till I find it. The hole we made when we fell. Put wood all round it. Juniper blazes up like gunpowder. I'll lie down in the hole, untie myself and wait. Not a single human thought will I think, not a single word of alien speech will I hear.

When the first frosts begin and I see that the time is ripe—just one match will be enough. There will be nothing left of me.

But that's a long time off. There will be many warm and pleasant nights. And many stars in the summer sky. Which one of them? . . . Who knows? I will gaze at them all, together and individually, gaze with all my eyes. One of them is mine.

Oh native land! PKHENTS! GOGRY TUZHEROSKIP! I am coming back to you. GOGRY! GOGRY! GOGRY! TUZHEROSKIP! TUZHEROSKIP! BONJOUR! GUTENABEND! TUZHEROSKIP! BU-BU-BU! MIAOW, MIAOW! PKHENTS!

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B. H. Liddell Hart

Churchill in War

A Study of His Capacity and Performance in the Military Sphere

THE FOUR CHIEF European war-leaders in World War II were Hitler, Churchill, Stalin, and Mussolini. As the governmental heads of their respective countries, they had the supreme direction of the armed forces, although only one of them had a military rank and title —Marshal Stalin. What were their qualifications for such supreme direction? How effective was their respective performance in exercising that directing power?

The fog of propaganda still lies so thickly round the figure of Stalin, and his part in the war, that it is impossible to analyse or estimate his military capacity and performance. In the case of Mussolini it is very difficult to do so, not only because he was overshadowed by Hitler, but also because he rarely attempted to impose his views and ideas on his military advisers, or on the military executants, Italian or German. He was always keenly interested in military matters, but obviously conscious of the limitations of his technical knowledge. All that can be said with certainty is that he utterly failed to grasp the practical requirements, in military equipment, of the ambitious military policy on which he had launched the Italian people—and never faced the stern realities of the military situation.

It is only in the cases of Churchill and Hitler that a serious analysis and estimate can be made. In both cases there is now abundant evidence for investigation, even though their performance has long continued to be obscured by the haze of legend and propaganda.

WINSTON CHURCHILL was a wonderful man, shining out from the gloom of an era of mediocrities in the democracies. He not only compelled admiration by his virtuosity, but inspired affection despite his intense egocentricity. At times he revealed a long view, helped by his historical sense, yet was inclined to act on a short view, prompted by his tactical sense as well as blinded by the force of his feelings. Once he went into action, his fighting instinct governed his course, his emotions swamped his calculations, and reason reasserted itself too late. In brief, his dynamism was too strong for his statesmanship—and his strategy. Thus when he got his hand on the helm in 1939, too late to avert the danger that he had foreseen, events continued to move with the same inevitability of tragedy as in the preceding period, towards further danger that he did not foresee.

Churchill the historian is to be seen at his best in the opening chapter of the first volume of his war memoirs, aptly entitled: "The Follies of the Victors." He there points out clearly how the peace treaty imposed on Germany after World War I paved the way for Hitler and another war. He indicts the economic clauses as both "malignant and silly."

Next he vividly tells the story of how Britain's National Government, under the joint leadership of Ramsay MacDonald and Stanley Baldwin, tragically failed to grasp the obvious threat created by Hitler's accession to power in 1933, and were fatally dilatory in developing Britain's

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own rearmament even when they did see the red light. His indictment is delivered with a severity that loses no force through being blended with charity. Yet it is not the whole story. There is no mention, or confession, of the fact that Britain's rearmament was handicapped from the start by the extent to which its foundations had been recklessly impaired at an earlier date.

Churchill himself was War Minister and Air Minister combined from 1918 to 1921, the crucial period for the reconstruction of the forces. The Air Staff had evolved a plan under which the post-war R.A.F. was to consist of 154 squadrons, of which 40 were for home defence. Under Mr. Churchill's aegis this was whittled down to a mere 24 squadrons, with only two for home defence, and the plan for state-aided airways covering the Empire was also discarded. When he moved to a fresh office in 1921, *The Times* had this comment on the fruits of his régime at the Air Ministry—"He leaves the body of British flying well-nigh at that last gasp when a military funeral would be all that would be left for it."

In the War Office, too, he sadly disappointed all the progressive younger soldiers who had built their hopes on his vision and activity as foster-parent of the tank early in the war. To their dismay, he allowed the older school to refashion the Army on "back to 1914 lines"—thus missing the best opportunity of reconstructing it on a modern basis. Then from 1924 to 1929 he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and each year the Army Estimates were pared down, with particular detriment to the development of Britain's diminutive but highly promising tank corps, which then led the world in ideas and design.

In 1927, the first "Experimental Mechanised Force" was formed as a result of years of argument and effort by Fuller and myself. In the speech on the Army Estimates that year the project had been announced with a big flourish by the then War Minister, Sir Laming Worthington-Evans. Adverse influences in the War Office, however, reduced it to a mere shadow, with the result that Fuller, who had been appointed to command it, resigned in despair. I then came out in the *Daily Telegraph* with a pungent article entitled "Is There a Mechanised Force?" This created a sensation. By writing it, I sacrificed my privileged position with the War Office, of which I had been given the free run. Nevertheless, the effect was a compensation—there were questions in Parliament; the War Minister bluntly told his military advisers that they had made a fool of him; and the force was hastily formed (although the value of having Fuller to direct it had been lost). Shortly after this, Churchill, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, asked me to lunch with him and Worthington-Evans at No. 11, and there I expounded my ideas about the mechanisation of the Army—which had a good reception, and for a time things looked promising. Churchill had paid a visit to the exercises of the Mechanised Force and seemed much impressed. He went so far as to confront the War Office with something approaching an ultimatum for the abolition of horsed cavalry regiments, or their conversion into a mechanised form. But the forces of tradition rallied from the shock, and he yielded to their objections.

WITH BETTER JUSTIFICATION Churchill recounts his efforts from 1934 onward to spur Britain's laggard rearmament and check Hitler's ominously purposeful steps. On rearmament Churchill was always emphatic, and over Munich defiant, but on other issues he was not so clear in mind or speech about the right course as he appears now. At the time he did not seem to see the ultimate risks of permitting Japan's and fascist Italy's initial steps in aggression and in flouting the League of Nations, while in the Spanish Civil War his own sympathy with the Francoists tended to blind him to the purpose and dangers of Hitler's and Mussolini's support of that side.

One had expected that he of all people would be quick to realise the strategic danger to us of a fascist victory promoted and achieved by German and Italian help. Instead, his class instincts obscured his strategic vision, and led him to throw his influence against any effort on the part of Britain and France to check the German-Italian moves in Spain. It was not until April 1938, after the war had been in progress nearly two years, and the doom of the Republicans was virtually sealed, that he reversed his line of argument and pointed out the dangers to us of a Nazi-made victory for Franco in Spain.

Even in regard to Britain's defence preparations, his influence was less effective than it could have been owing to his traditionalism, and the way it confused his vision. He admits that he "accepted too readily when out of office the Admiralty view of the extent to which the submarine had been mastered," and also "did not sufficiently measure the dangers to, or the consequent deterrent upon, British warships

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from air attacks." Unfortunately, his confident assertions reinforced the Admiralty's obscurantism, and weighed the scales against more progressive views. He definitely aligned himself with the "battleship school," as powerfully represented by Admiral Chatfield (First Sea Lord, 1933–38), and tended to discount what seemed to me the almost certain threat that air power, as well as the submarine, would bring to our naval supremacy.

I have a clear recollection of his attitude on these questions in various discussions—and that recollection is confirmed by reference to a record of his pronouncements at the time. In January 1938 he declared that: "The air menace against properly armed and protected ships of war will not be of a decisive character." Eight months later he reiterated this opinion, and went on to say: "This, added to the undoubted obsolescence of the submarine as a decisive war weapon, should give a feeling of confidence and security so far as the seas and oceans are concerned, to the Western democracies."

He also discounted, though he does not mention it, the effect of air power on armies. For in 1938 his verdict was: "It may be said with some assurance that the whole course of the war in Spain has seemed to show the limitations rather than the strength of the air weapon.... It would seem, therefore, that so far as the fighting troops are concerned, aircraft are an additional complication rather than a decisive weapon." Many observers drew the opposite deduction from analysis of these operations—a deduction that was to be confirmed in the Polish and Western Front campaigns of 1939–40, where the German dive-bombers in combination with tanks proved the decisive factor.

As for tanks, he still thought of them in the slow-motion terms of 1918, so that he failed to understand the new *Blitzkrieg* technique of swift and deep mechanised thrusts to cut the arteries of supply. This he admits in his account of the 1940 campaign, where he says:

> I did not comprehend the violence of the revolution effected since the last war by the incursion of a mass of fast-moving heavy armour. I knew about it, but it had not altered my inward convictions as it should have done.

That frank admission puzzled me, since he had often heard, and also read, the views of Fuller and myself about the potentialities of mechanised warfare. Perhaps the clue was provided in a significant remark made by his close friend and associate Brendan Bracken in explanation of Churchill's perplexingly ambivalent attitude towards tanks: "Bear in mind that Winston always remains the 4th Hussar."

Although he was quick to foresee, and warn his countrymen of, the potential danger from Hitlerite Germany, he showed curiously little interest in the new military technique that gave this danger its penetrative power. During discussions in which I took part, and he was present, in the last few years before the war, he dwelt far more on the quantitative aspect than on the qualitative aspect. This out-of-date outlook led him to cherish, and to foster, illusions about the power of the French Army, which he described as "the most perfectly trained and faithful mobile force in Europe." That was the year before the war!

In the autumn of 1937 I was surprised to find that he no longer took the German danger as seriously as he had earlier, and in October he remarked, publicly:

> Three or four years ago I was myself a loud alarmist.... In spite of the risks which wait on prophecy, I declare my belief that a major war is not imminent, and I still believe that there is a good chance of no major war taking place in our lifetime.

Significantly, too, he had said in the spring: "I will not pretend that, if I had to choose between Comunism and Nazism, I would choose Communism."

Once Austria was violated, however, he saw the danger to Czecho-Slovakia. Swallowing his distrust of Soviet Russia, he was quick to respond to her Government's proposals for a Franco-British-Russian alliance to check Hitler's designs. He did all he could to combat Chamberlain's course of appeasement towards Hitler and cold-shouldering of Stalin.

Churchill was at his best and clearest in that crucial year. His instinct coincided then with the basic facts of the situation.

THE FOLLOWING SPRING, after Hitler's next transgression, Neville Chamberlain abruptly reversed his course and gave the impracticable guarantee to Poland, without even securing Russia's support. Churchill endorsed it, whereas Lloyd George sagely pointed out its folly. Churchill's impulse overrode his judgment. In retrospect, he seems less certain about his choice—

> Here was decision at last, taken at the worst possible moment and on the least satisfactory ground, which must surely lead to the slaughter of tens of millions of people.

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Yet at the time he, along with almost all Britain's political leaders except Lloyd George, supported this irrational guarantee in the fond belief that it would check Hitler. Never has there been a more astonishing case of collective self-delusion under the influence of righteous indignation.

The outbreak of war brought Churchill back into the Government. His memoirs record his manifold activity towards accelerating military steps both inside and outside his own department. But they are also a self-revelation of his tendency "to miss the wood for the trees" in his absorption with the exciting detail points of the "war game."[1]

His pugnacity was predominant, and the reverse of prescient. From the first month of the war onward, he was agitating for action that meant violating the neutrality of the Scandinavian countries in the imagined aim of gaining an offensive advantage against Germany. This is made clear by his own account and the memoranda he includes, even though he omits some of his more inflammatory utterances at the time which all too obviously hinted at his intention. To some extent he saw that this was likely to provoke Hitler to take forestalling action, but he laboured under the delusion that "we have more to gain than lose by a German attack upon Norway and Sweden."

Churchill regretfully records that at first the "Foreign Office arguments about neutrality were weighty, and I could not prevail." But his arguments were helped by Russia's invasion of Finland, and the wave of feeling it aroused in England—"I welcomed this new and favourable breeze as a means of achieving the major strategic advantage of cutting off the vital iron-ore supplies of Germany."

He was oblivious of the fatal consequences of pushing Russia and Germany closer together, and embroiling Britain in war with both—at a time when she was perilously weak everywhere, especially on the Western Front. While Hitler talked of "thinking with the blood," the leaders of the democracies unfortunately acted in accord with such emotional thinking.

ONLY THE SUDDEN collapse of Finland saved Britain from being at war with Russia, and thus doubly stretched and strained. Yet Churchill then reverted to the plan of action on the Atlantic coast of Norway, to gain control of that neutral area. But a small German invading force forestalled and upset the plan, capturing the chief ports at the moment when the defenders' attention was absorbed by the British naval advance into Norwegian waters. The British were caught unready to meet this retort, and their own countermoves were badly bungled. Churchill's dream-castles had thus tumbled down in succession. Yet the blame fell on Chamberlain, as Prime Minister, and his enforced resignation opened the way for Churchill to take his place. It was the irony, or fatality, of history that Churchill should have gained his opportunity of supreme power as the result of a fiasco to which he had been the main contributor.

His habit of miscalculation, made all the worse by his misunderstanding of modern mechanised warfare, was soon shown again during the invasion of France—when his call to the armies to abandon the idea of defending waterlines and rely instead on "furious assault" not only showed his failure to realise that the French Army lacked the modern means of effective counterstroke, but encouraged the Allied forces to forfeit their last chance of stemming the German break-through. If they had concentrated every effort on holding the remaining waterlines, they might have had a chance—but they forfeited this through trying to concentrate their forces, inadequately mechanised, for a counter-offensive against the German flanks in 1914 style.

IN THAT dark time of disaster, Winston Churchill shone by his fighting spirit. But although full recognition should be given to the example he set, it would be a mistake to equate this, in a historical judgment of events, with its influence on the situation. The British have

[1] That tendency was increased through the way he became fascinated by striking phrases, as I had found in my own experience of him.

When the "Munich crisis" arose, and during the year that followed, he asked me to come as military adviser to private meetings of his "Focus," a small group of people who shared his views about the German danger; it included a number of subsequent members of his war-time government. At these meetings he used to call on me to deal with the strategic aspects of the situation. In the discussions that followed it often became apparent, more than in earlier years, that a point did not register in his mind unless it fitted in with his own ideas. Moreover, an apt phrase was all too apt to divert his attention from the thread of the argument while his mind revolved round the phrase.

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always been less dependent than other people upon inspiring leadership. Their record embraces relatively few spectacular victories, but they have a unique record in winning "soldiers' battles." The fact of being "up against it" with their backs to the wall, has repeatedly proved sufficient to rally them. Thus, in their case, inspiring leadership may be regarded as an additional asset rather than a necessity. It may be a necessity when they are weary, but not when they have had a slap in the face. It was Dunkirk that braced them in June 1940, more than any individual influence.

Moreover, Churchill's fighting spirit favoured activity so profusely as to foster offensive moves inspired by fresh miscalculations. The first was the delusion about the early possibilities of winning the war by a bombing offensive. This brought, in its recoil, a danger out of all proportion to what it was able to inflict—like throwing pebbles against an opponent strong enough to throw boulders in reply. As a strategic policy it amounted to nothing better than slow suicide—from which Britain was saved only by Hitler's obsession with Communist Russia, and decision to strike at her instead of concentrating his resources on building up bomber and submarine forces sufficient to finish off Britain.

Another rash step was the attack on the French fleet at Oran—a step, taken contrary to the judgment of the admirals on the spot, which naturally drove the French in indignation towards collaboration with the Germans.

CHURCHILL'S BEST MOVE in 1940, after the fall of France, was his bold decision to send reinforcements to Africa—even though it meant weakening the scanty defence of the homeland—and to take the offensive there against the Italian forces, numerically much larger but ill-equipped. That decision was justified both in principle and result. It produced a tonic success, and a distraction to the principal opponent, while opening up a new avenue for future development. But in carrying out the strategy of indirect approach and pressure, he impaired the effect by excessive dispersion of effort—by pursuing too many diverse aims, with limited resources. His generals, who were apt to err on the side of caution, are to that extent justified in their criticism of his direction.

Audacity is a great asset in war. But to be profitable it must be calculated audacity. Bluffing on a weak hand is always perilous, as it provides both a provocation and a temptation to a stronger opponent.

For while the defeat of the Italian forces in Africa was incomplete, Churchill tried to open up another fresh avenue in the Balkans. The landing of a British force in Greece naturally precipitated a German invasion of that country. Yet the force was dispatched at a time when it was clearly recognised that Hitler did not intend to move against Greece. The outcome was a second "Dunkirk," together with a reverse in Africa.

As a direct result of this rash move, Britain incurred a serious loss of prestige, and sacrificed a large part of the scanty equipment she then possessed. As an indirect result, she sacrificed the chance of completing her conquest of Libya—owing to the diversion of troops to Greece. By spurring the Germans on to establish themselves on the Greek coast, and the Aegean Islands, she also blocked the way for any subsequent Balkan move on her part when better prepared to undertake it.

Churchill's Greek venture cannot be justified by the retrospective argument that it delayed the invasion of Russia. For the Cabinet, as he himself admits, was not aware at the time that Hitler was planning such a step. Moreover, the postponement was not due to the British effort in Greece, with which Hitler had reckoned, but to his sudden fit of anger over the Yugo-Slav *coup d'état*. In any case the weather in Russia ruled out an earlier start there.

THE BASIC SITUATION was far worse than was commonly realised at the time—or has been recognised retrospectively, in the glow of final victory. "Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise." On the lines that the war was then running, Britain's destination was a dead end. But reprieve came mid-way through the year, when Hitler turned against Communist Russia—and away from Britain. That reorientation of his concentration brought a dramatic change of outlook for Britain.

The better prospect, however, was still far from being assured. If the Russian armies were overthrown, or even crippled, Hitler would be able to concentrate on finishing off Britain. Her reprieve began to look short-lived as, month after month, the Russians reeled back under successive heavy blows.

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The assurance of Britain's survival came late in the year, and in a different way. President Roosevelt had long been itching to come to the rescue—and to pursue Hitler's destruction in company with Churchill. But although he stepped further and further over the boundary of neutrality, and aided Britain more and more openly, he failed to provoke retaliatory action that would release him from "the restraints of a Congress" under which he "had writhed." Hitler was determined to avoid war with the U.S.A. if he possibly could.

Before the end of 1941, however, Roosevelt achieved his purpose in an indirect way. By comparison with Hitler's Germany, Japan was extremely susceptible to economic pressure. By putting an oil stranglehold on her, he overcame her leaders' reluctance to engage in a fight with the U.S.A. and drove them to strike back. Churchill's account makes the process vividly clear. Once Japan was at war with the U.S.A., Hitler could not avoid supporting his ally.

The extended war opened with initial disaster in the Pacific for the Anglo-Saxon powers. Strangely enough, neither was prepared materially or mentally, to meet the obvious riposte, although they had reckoned on one. The bulk of the U.S. battle fleet was sunk or disabled at Pearl Harbour, in barely an hour, while the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* were sunk off the Malay Peninsula three days later, thus clearing the way for the Japanese capture of Malaya and the Dutch East Indies.

These disasters cast a deeper shadow on Churchill's strategy. For his boldness in the Middle East was accompanied by a blindness about the Far East. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Sir John Dill, reminded him in May 1941 that "it has been an accepted principle of our strategy that in the last resort the security of Singapore comes before that of Egypt. Yet the defences of Singapore are still considerably below standard." Churchill replied: "I do not take that view, nor do I think the alternative is likely to present itself." In August he said: "I feel confident that Japan will lie quiet for a while," and a little later expressed his belief that the despatch to the Far East of a "K.G.V." battleship "might indeed be a decisive deterrent."

Yet on July 26th he had taken action with Roosevelt to impose economic sanctions which "meant that Japan was deprived at a stroke of her vital oil supplies." In earlier discussions it had always been axiomatic that such "a stranglehold" was almost bound to cause war, but at this crucial time Mr. Churchill took the risk too lightly. "I confess that in my mind the whole Japanese menace lay in a sinister twilight, compared with our other needs." That is an honest admission. But in view of the very large forces accumulated, and also frittered away, in the Middle East, it is most unconvincing when he adds "I am sure that nothing we could have spared at this time... would have changed the march of fate in Malaya."

THE BEST THAT CAN be said about these events is that America's entry into the war insured Britain against complete and final defeat more than anything else could have done. But her power and prestige suffered irreparable damage from them. They entailed the loss of her empire.

Moreover, from that time onward Churchill inevitably counted less than Roosevelt and Stalin in the conduct of the war, because of the much greater weight of resources they wielded. He became "President Roosevelt's lieutenant." But during the earlier period he counted more for good or ill, than anyone else in the war—except Hitler.

THE PRINCIPAL, and primary, issue for the Western Alliance after America's entry into the war was that of re-entry into Europe, for the creation of a "Second Front" to relieve the German pressure on Russia and develop a combined offensive against Germany. This soon became, and has ever since remained, a very controversial matter.

Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff were right in resisting the American desire, and the Russian clamour, for launching a cross-Channel attack in 1942. It would almost certainly have been a disastrous fiasco. That is very clear in the light of post-war knowledge of the inadequacy of the Anglo-American resources, especially in landing-craft, for developing and maintaining an effective re-entry in face of the number of German divisions posted in France.

Moreover, since it was psychologically important, or even essential, for the Western Allies to take some striking action that year, there was no other course so practicable and impressive as a landing in French North Africa, the north-west corner of that continent, to start the process of liberation and of loosening Hitler's grip. It

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threatened the rear of Rommel's army in north-east Africa and promised to make the whole Axis position there untenable.

Although the move failed to fulfil expectations of an early clearance of Africa, this failure was a blessing in disguise for the prospects of what became the Allies' next move. For the very slowness of Eisenhower's advance in November 1942 from Algeria into Tunisia had the great compensation of drawing Hitler and Mussolini to rush large reinforcements across the Mediterranean, to hold their Tunisian bridgehead. There, six months later, they were trapped with the sea at their back, and the resulting "bag" of the whole German-Italian army in Africa cleared the way for the Allied re-entry into southern Europe—which might otherwise have been easily blocked.

On the other hand, the unexpected and increasing delay in clearing the enemy out of Africa led, by degrees, to the deferment and eventually to the abandonment of a cross-Channel attack in 1943—on which the American Chiefs of Staff, headed by General Marshall, had set their minds and hearts. Whether such a landing in Normandy could have succeeded that year is doubtful. Montgomery, however, was among those who on this issue shared the Americans' preference for it, instead of a re-entry into Europe from the south. In the light of what we know now about the narrowness of the margin by which the Normandy landing succeeded in 1944, despite the greatly superior resources then available, it seems likely that a cross-Channel attack in 1943 would have proved premature. But the balance of evidence is not definite enough to rule out the possibility of its success.

THE LANDING in French North Africa, "Operation Torch," was mainly due to Churchill and his persuasive influence on President Roosevelt. When it had been mooted in June 1942 the British Chiefs of Staff, headed by General Alan Brooke, had agreed with the Americans in regarding it as impracticable. On the evidence of Alan Brooke's own diaries he only came round to accept it in July. From then on his dominant aim was, after clearing North Africa, to concentrate the Allied effort of 1943 on the invasion of Italy and "eliminate" her from the war. His diary entries for 30 November and 3 December have sharp complaints that Churchill's mind was "again swinging back towards a Western Front during 1943." The reason was that, besides American pressure, he and the Foreign Office feared that Stalin otherwise might make a compromise peace.

Brooke's next battle was with the American Chiefs of Staff. His diary for 11 December deplores that Marshall

> considers we should close down operations in the Mediterranean once we have pushed the Germans out, and then concentrate on preparing for re-entry into France. . . . I think he is wrong and the Mediterranean gives us far better facilities for wearing down German forces, both land and air, and of withdrawing strength from Russia.

The argument was renewed at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943. Ironically, it was the failure of Brooke's Mediterranean view, and the continued slow progress there that settled the matter. Not until May 1943 was the conquest of Tunisia completed. Meanwhile, Brooke had gained his way about making Sicily the next objective. But it was almost mid-July before the landing in Sicily took place, and mid-August before the island was cleared. The further delays that had occurred, coupled with the closeness of Sicily to the mainland, helped to determine that the Allies' next step should be into Italy, as Brooke desired. It was the logic of events resulting from loss of time, more than logic of argument, which swung the Allied strategy into his channel instead of the more direct line of the English Channel.

THE SUCCESS of the Allied invasion of Sicily led to the overthrow of Mussolini, and its promised extension to the mainland produced Italy's capitulation. These results initially vindicated Brooke's line of strategy, although they entailed a postponement of the cross-Channel attack until 1944.

But the Germans were quicker in reacting to the emergency than were the Allies in exploiting the opportunity. The Allied advance up the mountainous Italian peninsula became sticky and slow. For the German forces, under Kesselring, speedily recovered from the shock of their Italian ally's change of sides, disarmed the Italian forces, and skilfully used the natural obstacles of the peninsula to impose repeated and prolonged checks on the Allied advance.

The claims that have been made for the value of the Italian campaign as an aid to the cross-Channel attack do not stand analysis. For the distracting effect caused by the Allies' amphibious flexibility diminished when the ubiquitous threat was translated into an actual landing. By

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June 1944, they were employing in Italy a strength in troops double that of Kesselring. That was not a good investment proportionately, and justified the American argument for breaking off the offensive there after the strategic airfields in the south were gained. Moreover, its continuance did not draw German reserves away from Normandy, nor prevent them reinforcing Normandy, as the British hoped—and have claimed.

The only claim that can be made for the strategic effect of the Italian campaign, as an aid to the success of the Normandy landing, is that without its pressure the German strength on the Channel front might have been increased even more. The scale of the assault and the immediate follow-up forces there were limited by the number of landing craft available, so that the Allied forces employed in Italy could not have added to the weight of the Normandy landing during its crucial opening phase.

On the evidence of Brooke's diaries both he and Churchill were half-hearted, as the American leaders suspected, about launching a cross-Channel attack into Normandy—and continued to seek ways of evading this commitment. As late as October 1943 he records the receipt of a note from Churchill "wishing to swing the strategy back to the Mediterranean at the expense of the Channel"—and remarks: "I am in many ways entirely with him." The following week he records that Churchill argued the case for the Mediterranean "as opposed to" the cross-Channel attack, and himself terms the latter "very problematical."

The British strategic plan, however, received a bad knock at the Teheran Conference at the end of November, through Stalin's reinforcement of the American arguments against it. That was ominous, and ironical. For the Americans (according to Harry Hopkins' diary) had expected the Russians to team up with the British at Teheran in favour of a Balkan rather than a Normandy operations in 1944—an expectation which showed their blindness to the long-range political aims of Stalin's strategy. He naturally wished to see the British effort kept well away from Eastern Europe, and turned from Italy towards France.

So Churchill and Alan Brooke were pushed into a definite commitment which neither of them liked. Indeed, almost on the eve of the Normandy landing, Brooke wrote in his diary that he was "torn to shreds with doubts and misgivings.... The cross-Channel operation is just eating into my heart"—and feared that it would prove "the most ghastly disaster of the war." Even after victory in Normandy was complete, he continued, at successive stages of the advance into Germany, to express pessimistic doubts about the prospect of early victory in that quarter.

But from the time the Normandy landing was achieved he ceased, and Churchill too, to have any important influence on the course of the war—or on its sequel. Both strategically and politically, American influence became overwhelmingly predominant, and dictated the Allies' course. Indeed, when the British Prime Minister began to see the ominous consequences of the "unconditional surrender" policy, which he had so lightly adopted in company with Roosevelt, he was powerless to modify it. He had in effect become, as he earlier proclaimed himself, merely the American President's "lieutenant."

In the British sphere Churchill had continued to be the great animator of the war. The collection of minutes which fill the appendices of his volumes provide the best opportunity of seeing the genius of the man displayed in all its abundance. No one can read them without marvelling at his fertility, versatility, and vitality. He was constantly spurring or coaxing ministers, officials, and generals to greater activity and quicker progress. The characteristic use in his minutes of "Pray"—do this or that—was like a jockey showing the whip to a laggard racehorse. Daily his minutes streamed out in all directions, urging that obstacles should be overcome, that red tape should be cut, that excuses should not be accepted, that objections should be searchingly questioned, that obstruction should be brought to book.

Yet his account leaves the analytical reader with the impression that his actual influence was much less than is commonly supposed. It is astonishing to find how often he failed to get his views accepted by the Chiefs of Staff, even when his views were most clearly right. His account also reveals a hesitation to insist on what he considered right, and a deference to officialdom, that run contrary to the popular picture of his dominating personality. How is it to be explained? Was it due to the carry-over effect of spending two years in the wilderness during World War I as a penalty for putting

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himself in opposition to the weight of official opinion?

Although he had himself been slow to recognise some of the decisive new trends of warfare —with unfortunate effect on the earlier course of the war—his minutes from 1940 on show him as being usually in advance of his official military advisers and executants. Indeed, both in his minutes and in his later comments he has some caustic reflections on their defective vision and time-sense.

It may seem strange that he did not push them along faster, or replace them by more forward-thinking men. He himself remarks in one place:

> The reader must not forget that I never wielded autocratic powers, and always had to move with and focus political and professional opinions.

That view of his own limited powers hardly corresponds to reality, as created by his prestige and ascendency since 1940, but it may represent the continued impress on his own mind of what he had suffered in the previous war for overriding professional opinion. If his bitter experience then had left him apprehensive, the effect was unfortunate in making him feel that he must take as a "governor" the average pace of professional opinion—for that has always been a slow march.

The point is emphasised by a minute he wrote, after the Germans' airborne coup in Crete, regretting that the previous year a proposal for creating parachute troops had been whittled down from 5,000 men to a mere 500—

> This is a sad story, and I feel myself greatly to blame for allowing myself to be overborne by the resistances which were offered.

The same happened with tanks. He bitingly remarks: "We ought to try sometimes to look ahead." At the end he says:

> I print these details to show how difficult it is to get things done even with much power, realised need, and willing helpers.

But they tend to show that, owing to some inhibition, he did not truly use his power to obtain helpers who realised what was needed and were really willing. At no time in the war did Churchill insist that any of the experts in mobile armoured warfare should be given a chance in high command or in the higher direction of the Army. The absence of such knowledge accounted for many "grievous errors."

On the evidence of the records he prints, it would seem that he was not much helped by the guidance received from his official advisers. They repeatedly misjudged impending developments in many directions that were apparent to, and forecast by, outside observers who had no such elaborate machinery of intelligence. The evidence shakes confidence in the collective foresight of the combined staff organs in Whitehall.

A GREATER BLINDNESS was that which prevailed in the grand strategy of the war. Through it, the Western democracies have been in fresh and greater peril ever since the war ended. It was due to a too intense concentration on the short-term object, and failure to take a long view. As epitomised by Churchill himself the aim was "the defeat, ruin, and slaughter of Hitler, to the exclusion of all other purposes." The "unconditional surrender" formula naturally tended to rally the German people behind Hitler, thereby prolonging their resistance—and the war. Churchill, as well as Roosevelt, seems to have been blind to the obvious fact that the complete destruction of Germany's and Japan's power of *defence* was bound to give Soviet Russia the chance to dominate Europe and Asia.

There is much significance in Lord Esher's 1917 verdict on Churchill:

> He handles great subjects in rhythmical language, and becomes quickly enslaved by his own phrases. He deceives himself into the belief that he takes broad views, when his mind is fixed upon one comparatively small aspect of the question.

Churchill always had a deep-rooted tendency when concentrating on one problem to forget the other problems which were bound up with its solution. He lacked the power of relating one part to another, and the parts to the whole. A man may be successful as a tactician without that capacity for "comparison," and the sense of proportion from which it springs—but he will be almost certain to go astray as a strategist and still more as a grand strategist.

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Leslie Fiedler

Caliban or Hamlet

An American Paradox

THERE IS a peculiar paradox—the Caliban-Hamlet Paradox, I have chosen to call it—which resides at the heart of American Literature, and which is so intricately bound up with a basic ambiguity at the heart of European-American cultural relations, our endlessly baffled attempt to understand each other, that to study one means inevitably to deal with the other. Yet the first problem seems clearly an aesthetic one, amenable to formalistic or, at any rate, conventional literary approaches; while the other belongs just as clearly to the realm of sociology or social anthropology, which (as any college catalogue will testify) is a realm utterly alien to that of the arts. How, then, to deal with one world without betraying the other, or with both without falsifying both?

I should like tentatively, though not too much so (since I have been working along these lines for a couple of decades now), to attempt here an approach, perhaps best called literary-anthropological, that seems to me to satisfy the difficult conditions I have just defined. To one practising this approach, it scarcely matters whether he begins with the sociological aspect to the problem or the literary one. Indeed, it seemed to me at first best to introduce the subject I have chosen to confront with a consideration of the assassination of President Kennedy—or more specifically, with a pair of quotations extracted from a review that appeared in ENCOUNTER (June 1964) of Thomas G. Buchanan's odd and unconvincing study, *Who Killed Kennedy?* The reviewer begins by observing that:

> What Mr. Buchanan is trying to establish is that... this pattern [of Kennedy's assassination] does not accord with the popular [American] belief that the murder of a President is necessarily the irrational act of a lonely and isolated individual who is diseased or deranged in mind.

But precisely this popular belief is what the official Warren Commission report has ended by endorsing, drawing for us the portrait of an utterly alienated mama's boy prompted to a revenge whose motives he never quite understood by all the forces of heaven and hell that possessed him. That portrait, I have tried to indicate with certain deliberate echoes of Shakespearean language, assumes or implies a prototype which presumably failed to come to the reviewer's mind: the image, however vulgarised and degraded, of Hamlet.

What does occur to him is a quite different, though equally authentic Shakespearean prototype, appropriate to the political-plot version of Kennedy's death sponsored by Mr. Buchanan and particularly appealing to Europeans.

> Mr. Buchanan uses the murder of the President [the reviewer writes in another place] to hold up a mirror to America which reflects such a Caliban image of brutishness and corruption that her enemies can only view it with glee....

But why the second rather than the first prototype moves men on the other side of the Atlantic, why they continue to search for a millionaire Caliban behind the scenes, while we are content with a *lumpen*-Hamlet front and centre cannot be explained as long as we remain on the political or sociological level. Merely to begin, we must answer a prior—and more properly literary—question: what do Caliban and Hamlet, which is to say, the myths they embody, represent to the deep imagination of both worlds?

Such an answer is found, however, not in newspapers or the transcripts of police interrogations, but in novels and plays and poems, and especially in the deep images that lie at their hearts. Let me, then, make a new start by asking a pair of purely literary questions, which may seem at first quite beside the point, but which will eventually lead towards an explanation. First, why did T. S. Eliot at the moment of his

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recent death, why does he now seem so irrelevant to young readers and writers of poetry? And second, why does Walt Whitman, so long deceased, seem so living a model at the moment —living as he has not been for so many decades?

SIMPLY TO ASK these questions, to recognise that they can, even must be asked, is to suggest that American writers, old as well as young, are turning away after nearly half a century from sophisticated literary cosmopolitanism; and that they are returning—with extraordinary ferocity and what can only be called a willing suspension of intelligence—to the crassest kind of nationalism, nativism, and primitivism: back to Caliban, in short. We hear once more these days (as we have not heard since the triumph of the example of Eliot) of the necessity for exploiting American themes, using the native American language, and inventing—or restoring —native American metres. In this Calibanistic programme, the school of poetry once centred at Black Mountain College joins with that once centred in San Francisco—bohemian academics joining extra-academic bohemians to rescue poetry from the Anglophile universities and re-create it in the Anglophobe cafés.

We have lived, consequently, to see not only Walt Whitman himself, but more recent Whitmanisers like Henry Miller, William Carlos Williams and Louis Zukofsky move from the periphery to the centre of literary interest; while poets of the generation of Allen Ginsberg do variations on themes from *Leaves of Grass*, and the old Poundian cry, "Break the iambic!" (*i.e.*, the European heritage, the tradition, the accent of *Hamlet*) is echoed and re-echoed, as if from the barricades. "But what does it mean?" one asks further. "What is really at stake?" And the immediate answer at least is that the cultural situation responds to, even, perhaps, prophetically anticipates, a political and social one: that we have been preparing for an era in which it will become possible for Negro writers (relatively unsophisticated, and culturally—as we like to say—deprived) to act as the principal spokesmen for the American people; and for the life they share to seem the archetypcal life of us all, the language in which they communicate our archetypal tongue. The relationship of Whitman to this revolution Garcia Lorca intuitively grasped long ago, writing in *The Poet in New York*:

> Sleep, Walt, and let a black boy announce to the golden Whites the arrival of the reign of an ear of corn.

In the new homosexual mysteries, Lorca foresaw, only a Negro could play Kore to the Whitmanian Ceres. But it is desirable, perhaps, to come to terms with that relationship less metaphorically.

AS IS WELL KNOWN, we Americans are forever re-inventing ourselves in terms of the experience and values, the attitudes and idioms of one or another ethnic and cultural group out of the many which constitute our community. When the elected archetypal group is of one kind (genteel, university-educated, Atlantic Seaboard Anglo-Saxons, for example, as in the second half of the 19th century; or New York and Chicago Jews, with vestigial Marxist and Freudian vocabularies, as just before and after World War II), we are likely to think of ourselves as participating in a common cultural enterprise with Europe or the whole Western world. When, however, small-town boys from the mid-West or South—their various inherited cultures, chiefly North European, boiled away in the melting pot—emerge at the centre of our culture, as they did just before and after World War I, they tend to think of their art as made against the total European-Mediterranean tradition, in spite or contempt of their cultural heritage. Walt Whitman composed their manifesto long before they were born:

> *Come, Muse, migrate from Greece and Ionia,*
> *Cross out please those immensely overpaid accounts,*
> *That matter of Troy and Achilles' wrath, and Aeneas', Odysseus' wanderings,*
> *Place "Removed" and "To Let" on the rocks of your snowy Parnassus....*

How much more the Negroes (and following their example, the Negro-isers, Beat and Hip) tend in the 'sixties to create for us—and reflect from us—a desire to re-establish our culture on a denial of that Western cosmopolitanism whose political face is White Imperialism. Once we have granted that the nationalist-nativist-primitivist strain in our life and art is our most authentic expression, we are compelled to see the Negro as the ultimate, the absolute American—rivalled only by the Indian, to whose image he is assimilated in our classic books. Certainly, he is no transplanted European, but no more is he a displaced African after three hundred years

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on our soil; he is a new man, made in the U.S.A., a pure product of the New World.

Another way to say this is that the Negro is totally what all other Americans are only in part: the living embodiment of that absolute Other dreamed by Europeans—sometimes sympathetically, more often in fascinated horror—before they had ever dragged an actual Black from Africa to slavery in America. To be sure, that dream was prompted by self-hatred and a reversion from culture, and nurtured by a despair of reason and a yearning for the natural past, which existed only in myth; but it has, nonetheless, vexed Europe ever since the 18th century or earlier, eventuating in poems on the one hand, and emigration on the other. And here, of course, is the source of the paradox to which I began by alluding: the reason why the native American, when he glories in his *naïveté*, and thinks he is most anti-cosmopolitan—is in fact most abjectly submitting to Old World tradition.

In this sense, Walt Whitman and Mark Twain are the most European of our writers, assuming masks and poses with which the reader abroad can be at ease, as we never can be at home; for such writers strive to seem what the European eternally demands we make ourselves for his sake: the mythological anti-European he has defined in his literary tradition. In that tradition, Mediterranean and German and Englishman, rationalist and Romantic and pragmatist, find themselves oddly at one. And it is, perhaps, possible to say that Europeans can be aware of their own world as a single cultural unit only against a clearly identified cultural other: Islam once, America more recently. But this is another paradox, for another occasion and another sort of writer—one looking from rather than towards that Old World in which the New was invented.

Let me return to my main concern by asking instead: when, then, are American artists most deeply and truly selves of their own contriving, as opposed to the selves Europeans so eagerly foist on them? And let me suggest by way of an answer: when they are permitted, permit themselves rather, freely to ransack their whole cultural heritage (Hebraic-Hellenistic-Renaissance-Romantic, all that they share with Europe); and when they end by choosing, not what was already chosen for them before they existed as a people, but at first hand whatever they will. Or, to insist once more on the paradox, our writers are most themselves when they are able to see themselves precisely in borrowed images, images long used for their own purposes by our European forbears.

What images our writers do in fact choose to portray their sense of themselves and of us are fascinatingly various. I shall, however, pass over here all but one: omitting, for instance, the American artist's vision of himself and his people in the guise of Christ—as the Suffering Servant by whose stripes the European Gentiles are healed. Yet this image is of critical importance both in Hemingway and Faulkner; and recurs on the edge of unconscious parody in Arthur Miller's *After the Fall*, from which I once heard a baffled lady-spectator emerge muttering to herself, "Why, that son-of-a-bitch thinks he's Jesus Christ." Nor shall I deal with the Ulysses image in its peculiarly American form: that non-Homeric, romanticised figure out of Dante by way of Tennyson which so spectacularly haunts the imagination of Ezra Pound.

I prefer instead to concentrate on Hamlet, once more as revised by the Romantic imagination: the peculiarly American Hamlet seen backward through Goethe's young Werther. I choose this figure not only because it makes such a neatly illustrative Shakespearean pair with Caliban, but also because the Hamlet image seems to me the one that has most obsessively concerned our writers, all the way from *The Power of Sympathy*, whose appearance coincided with our birth as a nation, to *The Hamlet of A. MacLeish* or even Hyam Plutzik's Horatio poems. The central document in the history of American Hamletism is surely Melville's *Pierre*, a novel unparalleled until Norman Mailer's *An American Dream* for the unguarded way in which it projects deep fantasies shared by the author and his culture; and the *locus classicus* is the passage in which Pierre stands before his bookshelf:

> His mind was wandering and vague; his arm wandered and was vague. Some moments passed, and he found the open *Hamlet* in his hand, and his eyes met the following lines: *"The time is out of joint,—Oh cursed spite,/That ever I was born to set it right."* He dropped the true volume from his hand; his petrifying heart dropped hollowly within him. . . .

But though it is Pierre who finds the key lines for Americans in *Hamlet*, he is no more Werther-Hamlet-like, after all, than, say, Poe's Roderick Ussher, or any of the Dimmesdale-Coverdale melancholics of Hawthorne, or

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Faulkner's Quentin Compson, or Saul Bellow's Herzog, for that matter; or, to leave literature for life and remember the place from which we began, than Lee Harvey Oswald. We must understand, at any rate, the long background of convention and expectation against which Prufrock cries out, "No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be," the sense in which the simple rejection of that tragic role in favour of the comic Polonius is in our land a revolutionary gesture, a break with tradition.

WHAT, THEN, is the special appeal of *Hamlet* to the American imagination: of the plot, on the one hand, with the obligation to revenge fumbled and fumbled, then suicidally achieved; and of the character, on the other, with an anguish and melancholy disproportionate (as Eliot has insisted more than once) to the events? Surely, that very anguish and melancholy to begin with; for we inhabit a country where the required optimism of the ruling majority breeds a compulsory *angst* in the writing minority: the drunken revelry of fathers, a withdrawn brooding on the part of their sons. And the notion of suicide itself titillates even more, suggesting the possibility of an irrepressible, an unanswerable revolt against inherited obligations. Also, I think, American writers have tended to take the Prince of Denmark at his word when he speaks of his coward-making conscience; for we are experts on the inhibitory nature of conscience, as even Eliot, for all his theoretical anti-Hamletism, testifies:

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the Shadow.

Finally, however, I am tempted to believe that on some level of consciousness many American intellectuals have found (as I have found certainly) in the Romantics' favourite Shakespearean play, Melville's "true volume," an oddly apt parable of our relationship to Europe. While Europeans tend to think of us mythologically as rebellious slaves, which is to say, politically and in the context of society, we need to regard ourselves as wronged sons, which is to say, psychologically and in the context of the family. Both the Christ image and the Hamlet one cater to this necessity for inwardness; for archetypally speaking, Hamlet is Christ after the death of God, a Son of the Father whose progenitor survives only as a dubious ghost and whose single remaining prayer is: *My God, my God* (or, *Father, Father*), *why hast thou forsaken me?* The Hamlet image is, however, more unequivocally Oedipal and therefore more congenial to us: the figure of a son, who is a university graduate and intellectual as well as a Prince, loving still the soiled mother who has (perhaps) bereft him of his real, *i.e.*, his good, father and put him at the mercy of his bad one: a drunken murderer and usurper whom that son should overthrow, and, indeed might, were he not robbed of all power except that over words by the monstrous love that ties him more to his whored mama than to any paternal ghost.

The troubled cry of Hamlet when he first realises his mission and his disability is, at any rate, a peculiarly American one, which we need no Pierre to discover for us:

The time is out of joint; O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!

Here in a couplet is summed up the attitude towards the Old World and all in the New which comes to resemble it (resplendent pomp and established power and presumed injustice) that motivates not only such private vengeances as Oswald's, but also such public ventures as our current campaign in Viet Nam, or the often-proposed, often-delayed plan to "liberate Eastern Europe." But while the American, in Saigon or Dallas or Budapest, is imagining himself as Hamlet, the European may well be seeing him as Caliban.

Indeed, Shakespeare, who was not at all thinking about America, of course, when he wrote *Hamlet*, was precisely concerned with the New World when he was conceiving *The Tempest* and inventing Caliban. Despite his perfunctory effort to suggest a non-American setting for *The Tempest*, it is reasonably clear that Shakespeare had been reading accounts of an expedition to the Bermudas, as well as Montaigne's essay on Cannibals, while the fable of the play (one of the very few for which no model has been found) was forming in his mind. And it is highly probable that "Caliban" is a deliberate anagram of "cannibal," itself in all likelihood a corruption of "Carib," which is to say, a native of the Caribbean or a Red Indian.

AT ANY RATE, we can profitably think of Caliban as one of the earlier European portraits of the indigenous American, *l'homme sauvage* of an already existing mythology transplanted to the New World: part-Indian, part-Negro, all sub-

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human—indeed, as Shakespeare fancies him (remembering doubtlessly the medieval notion of the Western hemisphere as a watery world), part-fish. Caliban is, however, not only a sketch of the dark-skinned peoples in whose presence white Europeans have attempted to work out their destinies on our continent; he is also the model according to which such transplanted white Europeans have sometimes tried to remake themselves. D. H. Lawrence, as a matter of fact, believed that willy-nilly Americans of European origin do become assimilated to Indians and Negroes, being appropriately "fugitive slaves" to begin with; and he quotes, in the introductory chapter to *Studies in Classic American Literature*, a tag from *The Tempest* as appropriate to all inhabitants of the United States, whatever their origin:

'Ban, 'Ban, Ca—Caliban,
Has a new master—Get a new man.

But what finally does this Calibanistic view of America mean, this vision of the archetypal American not as the son of a usurping false-father and a sullied mother, but as a deformed slave, rebelling against legitimate authority at the instigation of certain European turncoats (more fools even than knaves) who have plied him with liquor? What follows when we have identified the mythological American with the drunken offspring of a witch and the Devil, bent on raping female innocence and overthrowing a mastery imposed in utter reason and benevolence? What can follow except condescension and contempt? Yet there is a qualifying note already present in Shakespeare, in the lines he gives Prospero reflecting Europe's sense of responsibility for America, for the institution of slavery, which was its first gift to us, and for the blackness of darkness embodied in slavery. *"This thing of darkness I,"* Prospero says (and the personal pronoun hangs at the end of the line, confessing Caliban the responsibility not of that arrant evil Prospero had presumably left behind in the Old World, but of the best he had been able to bring to the New), *"Acknowledge mine."*

IT IS A FASCINATING dialogue which the Shakespearean analogues suggest to us: the voice which Americans have claimed as their own crying, *"O cursed spite . . ."*; and the voice which Europeans have preferred answering, with a dying fall, *". . . Acknowledge mine."* It does not even matter that certain Europeans later switch sides, *i.e.*, support Caliban against the Master of Arts whose creature he is—hail Whitman, praise John Steinbeck, make a cult of Dashiell Hammett or of those ultimate imaginary Americans, those Calibans thrice removed, the Beatles. Occasions for misunderstanding still arise, opportunities for pathos and comedy—not only in literature but in life, in the councils of the U.N. or on the established routes of tourism—as the American, who is sure that he is Hamlet, confronts the European, who is convinced that he is Caliban.

Even funnier and more pathetic, however, is the confusion of certain American Hamlets attempting to persuade themselves, as the fashion changes at home, that they are in fact Calibans, have been secret sea-monsters all along. Karl Shapiro is a case in point, for instance, with his boasted shift from the Eliotic style of his earlier poems to the Whitmanian stance of "The Bourgeois Poet"; and Norman Mailer another, self-transformed into what he calls a "White Negro," *i.e.*, Caliban, from the Harvard boy dreaming of combat on the banks of the Charles.

. . . Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw. . . .

Most moving and most significant at the moment, however, is the case of James Baldwin, who, beginning with the delicate and scrupulous examination of conscience in *Go Tell It On the Mountain, Notes of a Native Son,* and *Giovanni's Room*, has been impelled to move on towards the brutal histrionics of *Another Country* and *Blues for Mr. Charlie.*

. . . Examples gross as earth exhort me.

I should suppose that to a Negro (or an Indian) the notion of playing Caliban has a special attraction, since not only most Europeans but many of their white brethren (eager to keep the number of Hamlets down) have thrust the role of rapist-rebel-slave upon them; and it must seem, at any rate, preferable to the alternative role of Uncle Tom. Even this is more farcical than tragic, however, deserving not the Hamlet cry I find trembling on my lips ("O cursed spite. . . ." once more) but almost any Calibanistic vaunt: perhaps best of all those astonishingly chic verses Shakespeare put into Caliban's mouth, a Beat American poem before its time:

Freedom, high-day! high-day, freedom!
freedom! high-day, freedom!

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Column

THE VISIT of Valeriy Tarsis to this country has been in some respects a unique event in the history of Anglo-Soviet relations. As such, it has given rise to a more than usually rich crop of the surmises and speculations that follow any unpredictable action by the Soviet Union, and it is a measure of how little we really know about Soviet conditions that none of them carry much conviction. One of the aspects of the visit that most required explanation is, of course, why Tarsis was permitted to come here at precisely the moment at which Sinyavsky and Daniel were being prosecuted for the same offence that he himself had committed; that is to say, of "smuggling anti-Soviet propaganda abroad." It has been conjectured that the motive was to sow doubt and confusion among foreign observers and distract attention from the trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel. If this were indeed so, the manoeuvre miscarried. Tarsis' arrival intensified, rather than diminished, public interest in the trial, and the contrast between the treatment accorded to him and to his fellow writers only emphasised the harshness and arbitrariness of their sentence.

The speculations inspired by Tarsis' arrival here were naturally increased because he came, not alone, but in company with another Soviet citizen, Mr. Victor Louis, who has since acted as Tarsis' host, mentor and friend in this country. Mr. Louis occupies in Moscow a position of enviable privilege to which few Soviet citizens can aspire, and his presence here with Tarsis is one of the most inexplicable and obscure features of the whole business. No more ill-assorted pair of friends has ever arrived on the shores of the Western world and perhaps both realise that the association has inevitably aroused doubts even in Tarsis' warmest well-wishers.

But whatever the mysteries that may surround Tarsis' departure from the Soviet Union, no one who has met and talked to him can doubt that he himself is an extraordinary phenomenon, perhaps a portent. Both in public and in private he denounces the Soviet régime in terms that do not permit of any form of compromise or qualification. For him, the Soviet state is a criminal organisation, to be despised equally for its immorality and its stupidity, and in these respects he draws little distinction between Stalin and his successors. When Mr. Wilson visited the Kremlin, he sat down with men who were without exception "fools, knaves, and hypocrites."

We in this country are by now so conditioned to the fine distinctions drawn by our professional Sovietologists between different aspects, and different leaders, of the Soviet state, their subtle analyses of its evolution from primitive communism to something which approximates to an advanced industrial civilisation, the delicate seismographs with which they register every shift, change and conflict of opinion in the dark recesses of the Kremlin, that Tarsis' root-and-branch condemnation of every manifestation of Communism, in theory and in practice, comes as something of a shock. Indeed, one might almost be tempted to think that, to the Soviet authorities, Tarsis' visit may have been thought to be worth their while, simply because even the severest critic of the Soviet Union might hesitate to concur in his *simpliste* view of it as the naked and absolute embodiment of evil. So some eighteenth-century critic of the Catholic Church in France might have been offended by Voltaire's cry of *Ecrasez l'infâme* and believe that, rather than this, there must be something to be said for even so corrupt an institution.

TO TALK TO TARSIS indeed is to be presented with something of an intellectual and moral dilemma. The reports he brings from the great sad country of which he speaks, of a land subjected to a régime of universal hypocrisy in which no one any longer believes, and where Communism and Marxism have become dirty words, or at best the most flagrant of superstitions, are in such total contradiction with the accounts, not merely of Soviet propagandists, but of detached and responsible observers, that one really has no choice between completely accepting or completely rejecting them. It is as if, from two returned travellers, one heard accounts of two entirely different countries which they happened to call by the same name, and were asked to decide which of them had an actual geographical existence.

In Tarsis' view of Russia there is no room for the belief that the Soviet Union, after surviving the horrors of war and Stalinism, is now evolving to a more liberal and humane régime; there is room only for a vast and tragic perspective of millions of men and women, huge cities, im-

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mense spaces, controlled by a degenerate and dying state in which decay has gone so far that it has lost all confidence in itself. When I asked him how it could be that after so many years and so many revolutionary changes his *Ward 7* could so exactly reproduce all the conditions of Chekhov's *Ward 6*, he shrugged his shoulders and replied: "It's simply that we have replaced one régime of absolute stupidity by another. . . ."

*

INDEED, in talking to him, one often has the slightly eerie feeling that one is in the presence of an inhabitant of a country which one once knew well, but which one thought had ceased to exist. It is the country in which stupidity, vice and innocence, good and evil, seemed to go hand in hand, of which one had learned in Tolstoy and Chekhov and Gogol, and most of all in Dostoevsky; and whether this country ever really existed, and, according to Tarsis, continues to exist, is a question which involves all our beliefs about the relation of literature to life. It would only be too easy to see Tarsis himself as one of Dostoevsky's holy fools, an Alyosha or a Prince Myshkin, who look at society from a viewpoint so totally different from that of the established order that except in the eyes of sinners and children they are inevitably judged to be mad. And equally, and at the same moment, one reflects that, to the eyes of modern psychiatry, which judges everything in terms of adjustment to the social norm, an Alyosha, a Myshkin, Dostoevsky himself, would undoubtedly exhibit verifiable clinical symptoms of mental disturbance of varying kinds.

It would not be difficult to detect such symptoms in Tarsis himself. The sustained tension and continuous excitement that inform his conversation; the superabundant vitality which, on his arrival here, carried him through a programme of press conferences, interviews, meetings, discussions, which would have exhausted any normal person; the Messianic element in the gospel he so fervently preaches; the intense egocentricity of all his attitudes; the conviction that he personally embodies forces which are capable of shaking Russia and the world; even his physical characteristics, the large, lined, weary yet immensely mobile face, the gestures that seem to involve not only arms and hands but the whole of his massive deep-chested body; the flood of words that flows compulsively and irresistibly from his lips; a kind of recklessness that refuses to take into account, either for himself or others, the practical consequences of his actions and words; in all these a psychologist might well believe that he detected the manifestations of paranoia or hypermania and conclude, like the Soviet authorities, that what he had to say might be dismissed as "anti-Soviet ravings."

For myself, I should be unwilling to do so. In talking to Tarsis, one sometimes has the impression of talking to Plato's man in the cave, who has sat for years with his back turned on the world outside, which he is unable to interpret except by the flickering shadows it throws on the walls which surround him, so that one would not be surprised by even the largest discrepancies between what he thinks and what the world may really be. But of the cave itself one feels convinced that he is a witness of truth, whose testimony demands the most serious consideration, particularly because one has no doubt of his own honesty, integrity, and sincerity of purpose. It is indeed these more than anything which most impress one in talking to him; his words carry with them the force of his entire personality, the weight of his thick-set body, the long experience of Soviet society which he illuminates with anecdotes, incidents, illustrations, which are chosen with an eye of a writer and an artist rather than a politician.

IN THIS, PERHAPS, one may find the secret of his power to suspend our disbelief. His revolt against the Soviet Union is not the product of those motives of calculation which inspire the politician; it is the moral revolt of an individual who has come to believe that salvation is only to be found in truth, courage, honesty, honour. One understands why he should admire Stendhal because he has something of that personal *virtu* which Stendhal himself admired above all other qualities, and equally Stendhal's detestation of its reverse, the hypocrisy which finally corrupts any social order in which the moral value of the individual as such has ceased to be recognised.

This sixty-year-old Russian Julian Sorel has now been deprived of his Soviet citizenship. What precise significance this may have in the very peculiar game which the Soviet authorities have been playing with him is at the moment difficult to say. But one would hope that before he continues his strange voyage of exploration in the Western world, he will give himself the time and opportunity to consider how he can best adjust himself to the conditions under which he must henceforward live. A man like himself will not find it easy to live in a capitalist, any more than in a Communist world, and in his new situation there are possibilities of tragedy both for himself and for others. One

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may be sure that his experiences under capitalism will be watched with the keenest interest by the same authorities who have made it possible for him to enjoy them, and that the interest will not be benevolent. On the other hand, Tarsis has many disciples, personal, literary and political, among the younger generation of the Soviet Union, and to them what he makes of his life in the West will be a reason either for hope or for despair.

*

IT IS A FAR CRY from the kind of issue with which Tarsis confronts one to the domestic politics of an Oxford college. Somehow, after talking to him, one does not think much of the odd combination of revolutionary ardour and *furor academicus* which inspires Dr. David Caute's article on "Crisis at All Souls" in the March ENCOUNTER. Most people, I imagine, will find it interesting less for its discussion of academic problems than for its intriguing revelations of what goes on behind the *huis clos* of All Souls; yet apart from the academic issues involved, I cannot think that the revelations are of any particular significance.

Dr. Caute, however, does at one point in his article give some indications of the ideals which he believes should inspire All Souls in facing the problems of a world in which, in his view, it has made a fortune but failed to find a role:

> the whole atmosphere of modern university life, the professional approach, the decline of the gentleman amateur, the practice now widespread among dons known as marriage... the opening up of higher education to wider strata of the population, the rude entry of Jimmy Porter, the notion of accountability to the state, the replacement of the old classical syllabus by new, more functional subjects....

I am not sure that I regard this as a very attractive programme of university reform, either in style or in content. Surely the university, even with the aid of the professional approach and new functional subjects cannot, and should not, be made a place suitable for the needs of Jimmy Porter? Certainly I hope that the Franks Commission has something more inspiring to tell us when at length it reveals what future it has in preparation for the university of Oxford.

What Dr. Caute chiefly objects to in All Souls it seems, is its wealth; he even manages to suggest, most misleadingly, that in some way it has been ill-gotten. He finds it all the more offensive when, as he says, the poorer Oxford Colleges are operating on a shoe-string; so narrow a shoe-string indeed that, he calculates, a distribution of £38,000 to them would be sufficient to create sixty additional teaching fellowships. I know that some colleges are poor and I know that some dons are underpaid; but I did not know that poverty and deprivation had struck so hard at Oxford that a fellow could be maintained today at a total cost of £620 a year. It's enough to encourage one to buy a fellow of one's own.

What Dr. Caute does not tell us, however, is what the colleges are doing with their shoestrings and why they should have sunk into such abject pauperism, and why it is so obviously a good thing in itself to create sixty new fellows, and what they would do as they gnawed the crust of poverty in Jesus or Hertford. I have no doubt that there may be good and convincing answers to these questions, but at least one would like to know what they are before accepting Dr. Caute's dogmatic condemnation of what was once his own college.

FOR THE TRUTH IS that today one would like to know what the university itself is for, before one could say how All Souls could usefully contribute to it out of its riches, and on this subject there is by no means a general consensus of opinion which Dr. Caute appears to take for granted. Indeed, the very existence of the Franks Commission is evidence that the university is not wholly clear about what it should do with itself, and I have a suspicion that when the Commission does finally produce its proposals they will provoke as much dissension and controversy within the university as Dr. Caute's zeal for reform appears to have done at All Souls.

Nor is this surprising. For in essence the university and the colleges, including All Souls, are confronted by the same problem, which is how their traditional structure, function, and purposes can best be adapted to a situation which is now placing an unprecedented strain on our entire system of university education. This strain has arisen primarily for two reasons. The first is the rise in the post-war birth-rate and in the number of those seeking a higher education; the second is the realisation by the state that without an adequate supply of properly trained scientists, technologists, teachers, bureaucrats, executives, and administrators it would be impossible for Britain to survive as an advanced industrial economy.

*

IT HAS BEEN assumed since the war, almost without question, and certainly without adequate examination, that the proper answer to the problems created by these changes is an

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immense increase in the provision of university education, both by the expansion of existing universities and the creation of new ones. It has also been assumed that this can be achieved without any fundamental change in our traditional ideas of what a university should be and what it exists for; that it will not involve any significant lowering of the academic standards which the universities have hitherto maintained; most of all, that this can be done under a system of university finance which allows the universities no chance whatever of long-term planning and denies them any possibility of the organic and natural growth which provides the only condition under which learning and scholarship, whether scientific or humane, can truly flourish.

All of these propositions are pure assumptions. Some of them are demonstrably false. To each of them there is an alternative which on the whole is more likely to be true. But until they have been adequately investigated, it is impossible for any university to foresee either how its present or future resources could be best employed or indeed what those resources are likely to be. In such a situation, there would appear to be rational grounds for an institution like All Souls to hesitate before adopting any changes calculated to destroy its traditional character while offering no assurance whatsoever that it will be replaced by anything of equal or greater value.

DR. CAUTE quotes, with approval, a slightly sinister remark of the Franks Commission addressed to the representatives of All Souls: "Fellows of Colleges are trustees for their generation of the assets they control." This is the kind of platitudinous, and slightly unctuous, half-truth which unfortunately is all too common in all discussions of university affairs; like most of them, it also conceals a dangerous untruth. Colleges are not only trustees for the present generation; they are also trustees for the past and for the future. It would be deplorable if, under the strain of the existing situation, they were to submit to changes which, with very little intellectual justification, would jeopardise the claims of either.

I am reminded of a remark of Lord Brand's, at a college meeting at which All Souls was discussing the question of whether to transfer some of its assets from land into equities. "If there had been such things as equities in the Middle Ages," he said, "there wouldn't be a college in Oxford today."

R.

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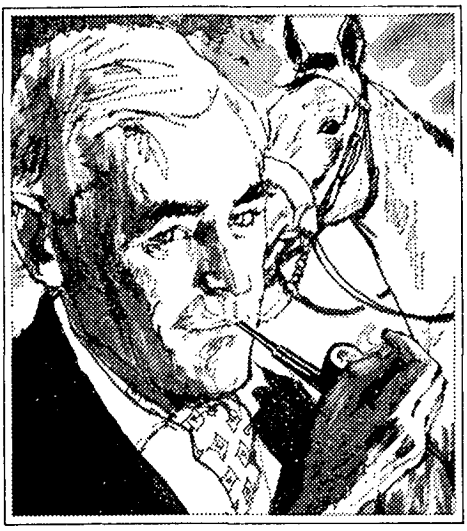

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A Conversation with Claude Lévi-Strauss

By George Steiner

IN THE LECTURE LIST of Cambridge University a course of lectures is announced for Lent Term 1966 under the title, "The Anthropological Theories of Lévi-Strauss." This is in itself a rather startling fact. It is very rarely indeed that a great university, and particularly one that is formal and conservative in its bias, offers a course of lectures on the work or thought of a living man, let alone of a man in midstream of his achievement. Universities usually prefer to deal with the safely dead.

But to the anthropologists, Claude Lévi-Strauss has come to matter intensely. Much of anthropology just now seems to identify itself in response to Lévi-Strauss either by adopting and developing his ideas or by opposing them. Lévi-Strauss, whose work is a kind of logical apex to the tradition of French anthropology dating from Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, seems to be playing, in the field of anthropology and ethnography, something of the role which Freud played in the revaluations of modern psychology.

But like Freud, Lévi-Strauss has relevance well outside his own discipline. The table of contents of a recent special issue of the French periodical *L'Arc*[1] is suggestive: next to a highly technical extract from Lévi-Strauss' most recent work on the culinary practices of Amazonian Indians there are essays dealing with Lévi-Strauss' striking influence on current literary criticism, with the relations of his "structural method" to our understanding of music, and with the increasing tension—one would almost say conscious rivalry—between the philosophic world-views of Lévi-Strauss and Sartre.

Lévi-Strauss' influence, moreover, extends far beyond France: to the United States where he worked and taught during the Second World War; to Latin America where he did much of his field-work in the 1930s; to England which Lévi-Strauss honours as "the land of Frazer and Malinowski."

The core of Lévi-Strauss' achievement is highly technical. It lies in the application to anthropology—to the study of human cultures and social groupings—of some of the principles and tools of modern structural linguistics.

Modern linguistics has made brilliant progress in the understanding of languages, of how languages are built up and how they alter, by positing that any particular verbal element has meaning only in relation to the general structure and dynamics of the linguistic whole. Or to put it in an obviously over-simplified way: linguistics has led us to think of communication as a complex *code*, as a set of functional exchanges between source and receiver. The process of *decoding*, of understanding the structure of transmitted meaning, has important points in common whether we are dealing with a language, a convention in the graphic arts, a system of key relations in music—or, says Lévi-Strauss, with the customs, techniques, and myths of a society.

Lévi-Strauss' studies of kinship patterns in Amazonian, Australian Aborigine and South-east Asian societies lead to arresting notions. Women are unspoken messages between tribal groups, units of economic, biological, and symbolic significance exchanged in a manner which keeps the general structure—the *meaning*—of the particular society coherent and dynamic.

Or we are told, in a densely-argued major treatise now in progress, that the cooking habits of an Amazonian society "are a language in which that society unknowingly translates—reproduces—its essential structure." When a primitive people learns to cook at will, with fire that can be lit or put out, the culture breaks its primal links with the sun and with the animal world which eats raw. What greater events, asks Lévi-Strauss, can there be in man's history?

Only the anthropologist can assess the technical validity of Lévi-Strauss' arguments. But their challenge to our ideas on man and society, on history and social mores, on language and the nature of myths, is undeniable and fascinating. Already such books as *Tristes Tropiques*, *La Pensée Sauvage*, and *Anthropologie Struc-*

[1] *L'Arc* No. 26 (1965) contains a comprehensive bibliography of Lévi-Strauss' writings.

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turale are a part of our literacy.[2] By taking the word *anthropology* in its largest and radical sense—a total science of man—Lévi-Strauss is becoming as much a creator of living intellectual forms, of symbolic possibilities, as he is an explorer of myths.

—Professor Lévi-Strauss, I think a key factor in your work is that you are taking the word anthropology in an etymological sense, as the science of man. Would this be a fair interpretation?

LÉVI-STRAUSS: Yes, undoubtedly. As you know, I was brought up as a philosopher and like many in France I came to sociology and ethnology from philosophy. I had in mind to answer philosophical questions. Ethnology appeared to me as a means (and perhaps the only means) to bridge the gap between a philosophical approach and a scientific approach to the problem of man. I mean the philosophical approach such as we find it, for instance, in the work of Kant. It consists, of course, of trying to understand the human mind from the outside, but from a limited outside, that is the study of his own mind by the philosopher himself, or the study of the mind at work in the scientific thought of his society and of his time. This is a great limitation since it is not obvious that what is true within these limits will be equally true when applied to mankind considered as a whole, while ethnology provides us with the greatest width, if I may say so, of human experience.

—But could it be that ethnology and ethnography with the concept of field-work which the layman immediately associates with these, are a subdivision of a real new anthropology, of a human science towards which ethnography contributes possible material?

LÉVI-STRAUSS: Well, it undoubtedly is; and, I would say, for two reasons. The first is that the anthropologist cannot work exclusively with his own material. He has to use material which was collected by his colleagues, and even by colleagues from different cultures and from different periods of history. And he has to get some experience of his own in order to be able to make a critical assessment of this work. The second answer is: I feel that what makes Anthropology or Ethnography irreplaceable is the kind of commitment it produces in the field-worker. It is not only to take a look at something completely strange or foreign, like, say, the leg of a fly under the microscope. It is to become personally involved as an individual, and most of all as a representative of one's own culture and civilisation, and to experience the complete upheaval which results from trying to understand a culture entirely different.

—So that in studying the antecedents of your own thought, there's not only the French classic school of Social Anthropology of Durkheim and Mauss, but there would, for example, be a stream in which Malinowski might be important?

LÉVI-STRAUSS: Oh, most certainly. With Malinowski I quite often disagree on theoretical problems, but there is absolutely no doubt that Malinowski meant the birth of a new kind of anthropology: not the armchair anthropology of the past but an anthropology where the field-worker tried to get himself fully and completely involved in the life of the population he is studying.

—Doesn't this involvement have its analogy with a kind of new Science of Man which links with Marx? One is struck by your remark in Tristes Tropiques *that you read some pages of Marx, you mention the* 18th Brumaire, *his most famous political pamphlet, when setting about your own work.*

LÉVI-STRAUSS: I would not over-emphasise the point. After all, it is only a matter of my personal intellectual history. It is a fact that when I was sixteen or seventeen years old, I was initiated by persons belonging to the socialist parties in Europe to the reading of Marx. That was for me a kind of revelation, and of course I've remained under this influence. But probably there is something more to it than a purely personal incident in one's own history. It is a critical wariness about what appears to be true in the matter of social life or intellectual thinking. The real meaning of anything which takes place in the mind of man is not on the surface, but should be elicited through a work of interpretation. It seems to me that Marx has been the very first to introduce in social science a kind of "de-coding," the idea that human institutions which he believes in and which he loves have meaning only after having been decoded. This is basically the attitude of the ethnographer when he is working in the field. He is looking at things which in terms of his code are meaningless and which he has to decode in order to understand them.

—I'm puzzled that one can take this view of Marx, if I read you rightly, when your theory of history and of cultural hierarchy is profoundly "un-Marxian." This seems to lie at the core of your dialogue with Sartre at the moment. Is it right to say that you do not in fact accept the notion of the progressive determinism of historical events, but are working much more with the idea of a simultaneity of complex cultural values?

[2] *Tristes Tropiques*, 1955 (*World on the Wane*, Hutchinson, 1961); *La Pensée Sauvage*, 1962 (*The Savage Mind*, to be published by Weidenfeld this year); *Le Totemisme Aujourd'hui*, 1962 (*Totemism*, Merlin Press, 1964); *Anthropologie Structurale*, 1958 (*Structural Anthropology*, Basic Books 1963. *Mythologiques: Le Cru et le Cuit*, Vol. I, Paris, 1964, is to be published in England by Jonathan Cape.

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LÉVI-STRAUSS: Let's get it straight. Of course, I am not a Marxist in the ordinary sense. My outlook is somewhat different; it is devoid of any kind of mysticism. But we must first of all try to make a demarcation between what Marx discussed and what he did not discuss. Now the first point is that Marx, quite consciously, said that he was not concerned with so-called primitive culture, that these primitive cultures were ruled by kinship systems and not at all by class conflict, and he left the matter entirely open. The second point is: something which can be true, when we look at it from inside a culture and from the point of view of this culture, is no longer true when we try to consider it from the outside. Therefore, I am in full agreement with Marx, and even with Sartre, when they say that for a member of modern contemporary civilisation things appear that way. History has a meaning and should have because this is the only way to give a wider meaning to civilisation itself. I can perfectly well claim at the same time that while this is true inside the society of the observer it ceases to be true when we try to reflect a broader point of view and look at it from the outside. It is exactly like Euclidean geometry which is absolutely true within certain limits at a certain scale, but which cannot be used when we are trying to widen our experience to make it include greater dimensions.

—You make the point that seen in a different time-scale the neolithic age, for example, might count more than any other period of human history because weaving, agriculture, the domestication of animals were then developed. Would it be right to say that for many so-called primitive cultures this neolithic centrality, if I can use that phrase, has remained? We count in years, and primitive civilisations possibly count in long ages.

LÉVI-STRAUSS: They don't even count in long ages. After all, there is a kind of philosophical and I would even say metaphysical choice. We cannot say the so-called primitive civilisations don't have a history. They have history exactly as much as we have since they have grown out of the same human stock over millions of years. But they don't have the same attitude towards history as we have. They dislike it. They think change is bad and that wisdom for man should be to try to remain as much as possible in the same condition as the conditions of the primeval times. We have exactly the opposite attitude.

—Isn't there here an analogy with some of the highly speculative thought of Freud in Civilisation and its Discontents? *You use the image that in your own thinking geology was important, the deep study of a terrain. Psycho-analysis is perhaps one kind of geology of consciousness which also corresponds....*

LÉVI-STRAUSS: Marxist interpretation is also a geology of society.

—Would it be just to say that in one sense the thought of Freud is a prelude to some of your thinking about mythology and consciousness: that it is a chapter which comes before the new anthropology?

LÉVI-STRAUSS: Well, I could not give a straightforward answer. It is from a mythological point of view; exactly for the same reasons which I have outlined a moment ago about Marx—that is the need for de-coding as the basic way towards understanding anything which is taking place in human nature. On the other hand, I could not agree in any way with the kind of interpretation which is given of mythology and individual myth by the Freudian school.

—Could we look at one familiar myth? You touch on the Oedipus story in some detail. You say that the recognition of the fact that the procreation of children is not autochthonous but depends on parents, marks a tremendous crisis for human consciousness. In the Oedipus myth we are listening to a distant echo of this crisis of understanding. Freud, of course, reads it very differently. Does your reading exclude his, or does it ultimately include it as yet another significant myth?

LÉVI-STRAUSS: Yes, it does. Of course, mythical thought does not only exist in primitive culture. It is easier to study it in primitive culture because we have no hesitation about what we should classify as myth and what we shouldn't, for the very reason that the mythical category is acknowledged as such by these primitive people and they, in fact, tell us, this is a myth. Yes, I believe that Freud—and this is not at all a criticism, on the contrary it is praise—Freud has been able to give life to a great myth of our own civilisation and of our own culture. As such it should be included in the attempt to analyse and understand mythical thought. The reason why I would not agree with the psycho-analytic interpretation is on account of the *individual* nature of the so-called myths which are produced by neurosis, as against the collective nature of true mythology in the anthropological sense of the term. Of course a myth is not a collective *creation* because there must have been somebody, some individual sometime in the past who began, after a personal experience—perhaps a dream, I don't know—to tell a myth. Obviously it's individual in both cases. But in one case it is individual in its origin and it remains so during the whole lifetime of the neurotic's myth. In the other case it cannot remain individual or else it will not be an authentic myth. It must be immediately assumed, accepted, by the collectivity, and this

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collectivity is not only in space, but also in time. This means that at every moment there is a kind of feed-back effect. Every individual who memorises the myth introduces changes, and these changes one after the other are erased by the response of the audience. This response keeps the myth within a definite relationship between the kind of representation which can be held by the group and the group itself. This process gives to the collective myth a kind of objectivity, I would even say rigidity, which makes it an object, an absolute object, such as the atoms or molecules which are studied by the physicist or the chemist—and something entirely different from the productions of the mind of the neurotic.[3]

—May I take that one step further, into a very speculative domain? The biologists and biochemists do seem to be within distance of the creation of macro-molecular life. This is partially a semantic problem—will it be life? But it is already something one can rationally talk about. Would your analysis lead you to expect that a new body of myth will arise to help us endure this shock—as human civilisation once endured the shock of understanding paternity and maternity? Will the Oedipus myth lose its relevance, so that there will be dead myths for us vanishing into a kind of museum of the imagination?

Lévi-Strauss: It will always be possible for men to take refuge in a defensive position and to say you have created life "to some extent." That margin will be our defence. But let us suppose that it has become possible in time to create not only micro-organisms but more developed ones, and even organisms like man himself. Well, it will be always answered that there is a difference between this created man and man, that this artificial man was created by man, while true man has no condition but himself.

—Is the name Jung deliberately missing from much of your recent thought? Or are there links? Do you have views about the transmission, the possible genetic remembrance of myth? Or are you using the phrase "collective" in a very different sense from Jung?

Lévi-Strauss: In a completely different sense. It is on purpose that I never make any reference to Jung, for a practical reason as well as a theoretical reason. The practical reason is that Jung himself and his followers are prone to mystify themselves into believing in the intrinsic value of mysticism and the collective unconscious. Of course, I am quite aware that the kind of attention I give to mythology and magic ritual could be used by some to very bad purpose. That is obscurantism. This kind of complicity which I feel in the Jungian school is quite abhorrent to me. The theoretical point is that I think the Jungian approach is entirely mistaken because it is based wholly on the consideration of content and not at all of form. In accord with modern linguistics I believe that content never has a meaning in itself; that it is only the way in which the different elements of the content are combined together which gives a meaning. That is, I don't believe that water, sun, fire, have any meaning. I think that what is important is the words, the mythical words, which are built up by each culture, using these elements which themselves are entirely devoid of meaning.

—If we imagine the history of mute people for a moment—an absurdity, but just for the example —Jung would say that they can transmit memories and mythologies physiologically. If I understand you, this would be pure mystique. For you a mythology is transmitted by communication, by speech, by one people learning from its ancestors.

Lévi-Strauss: Let me make a distinction. Your mute people could, of course, transmit certain things which are indispensable: the laws governing the functioning of the brain, which to some extent are reflected in mythology, are, of course, universal. But mutes could only transmit a set of purely formal properties. The content, the subject matter, which myth makes use of, could, of course, only come from language and from historical traditions.

—You yourself do not expect that the deeper knowledge of the brain would show an actual mechanism for inheriting memory, for inheriting concrete events over long periods?

Lévi-Strauss: Oh, no.

—We have an anthropology in the West: we study other peoples. Do other peoples either study each other, or us?

Lévi-Strauss: I will not generalise. I think that nothing is more dangerous for anthropology than to build up two categories, the so-called primitive peoples and us. Of course, these so-called primitive peoples differ as much from each other as each of them differs from us. I would say that there are primitive peoples without curiosity, and there are others which have great ethnographic curiosity. I remember, for instance, that when I was with the Nambikwara in Central Brazil one of their bands had a chief who was tremendously interested in the customs and ways of life of the neighbouring tribes. We really exchanged information as I would have done with a colleague. Also in Australia it is known that each tribe is very much interested,

[3] Lévi-Strauss' complicated attitude towards Marx and Freud is discussed by Edmund Leach in *Claude Lévi-Strauss—Anthropologist and Philosopher, New Left Review* No. 34 (November–December 1965).

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for instance, in the marriage regulations of the neighbouring tribe, that they discuss them, that they send (I would even say) ethnographic missions into the field to study them in order, sometimes, to adopt them and to change their own rules. This, of course, cannot be compared with our own anthropology. First of all, because of the lack of writing. But your question has raised the general problem of the lack of cumulative science among people without writing. If anthropology is typically Western it is to a great extent on account of a very special relationship which our civilisation has towards these people. Here, there is nothing for us to be proud of. After all, it is because we have killed them, exploited them, for centuries, that it was possible for us to look at them as mere things. We can study them as objects because we have treated them as objects. There is no doubt that anthropology is the daughter of an era of violence.

—Isn't this treatment of them as "objects" crucial to your disagreement with Sartre?

LÉVI-STRAUSS: Yes, because for Sartre they still are "objects."[4]

—They still are objects—and for you this is a tragic piece of history rather than a theoretical donnée *or advantage. But to what extent does the anthropological study change, hopelessly change, the material it studies? Are we coming to the end of a great period of observational anthropology as the people whom we observe are so altered by the dialogue, by our act of observation?*

LÉVI-STRAUSS: Of course, if you send an enormous anthropological team into a small tribe with photographers, cameramen, and tape-recorders, you would alter culture. I have never worked that way and I don't believe in working in that way. I think that the anthropologists (and I'm still "Malinowskian" in this respect) should work alone with as little apparatus as possible: just a notebook and a pencil, and make themselves as unobtrusive as possible. I don't think that in this condition you will alter the material. The question you were raising has a meaning on a different level. We cannot at the same time study "structure" and "process." We can either study one or the other. If we wish to understand process, *i.e.*, the way in which a given society changes and experiences this change, we lose track of the structure. If we look at it from the outside we can understand the structure, but we cannot understand the process any more. This would be the true uncertainty principle of anthropology.

—As the new electronic media of communication become more and more powerful, more and more uniform, as travel becomes more rapid, is there not a very simple way in which the situation of the so-called primitive world is beginning to disappear? What will be left in fifty years of any great difference or distance? Where will the anthropologist go without meeting his own television programme?

LÉVI-STRAUSS: First of all, this is not absolutely new. If you care to read Sir James Frazer's Inaugural Lecture at Liverpool University in 1908 he was saying that anthropology was on the verge of disappearing, that there were almost no primitive people left on the surface of the earth. The situation is now much more serious than it was. But many things die hard in human societies. Besides, if it is true that we have less and less material to work with, we are using finer methods; we are better at doing more with less; and this will give us still a good many dozen years of work. The second point is: we are taking for granted that since we have witnessed during the past thirty or forty years the rise of a kind of world-wide civilisation, the time will come very soon when mankind will become absolutely uniform. This is possible, but it is not at all certain. It is quite possible that there is a regulating principle in mankind, what I would call a principle of diversity, which will make it compulsory for differences to appear within this world-wide society to compensate to some extent for its uniformity. Perhaps this will take place in completely unforeseen ways. It is not at all impossible, for instance, that the kind of gap which we are now witnessing more and more between the generations is a transposition in time of what was taking place earlier on in space. The tremendous development of communications makes it much easier for the younger generation to build up a culture of its own different from the culture of the previous generation. So in that case we will still have diversity to work with. It will not be exactly the same kind, but it still will be diversity. There is a third point. Let us suppose that this does not take place—we will then work with computers. I do not mean at all that the so-called primitive societies are like machines; this would be far from my opinion. What I mean is that a distinctive feature of anthropology is that we have always tried to work with societies considered as being at the frontier of human culture. In the Middle Ages it was impossible to do so because culture ceased at the neighbour's doorstep. The limit was too close. The problems on which we can work

[4] In the last chapter of *La Pensée Sauvage*, Lévi-Strauss accuses Sartre of regarding all men who have not yet entered a conscious, dialectical phase of history, as "objects." Sartre is expected to take up this charge in the continuation of *Critique de la raison dialectique*.

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with electronic computers will be of the same type as before, but without set limits. We can work with imaginary societies instead of with ready-made experiences such as are provided by the so-called primitive.

—A question about your relationship to linguistics and to the school of linguistic analysis which goes from the pioneer work of Saussure (Cours de linguistique générale, *1916, 1922*) *to Jakobson and N. Chomsky* (Syntactic Structures, *1957*). *Does your view of the key role of linguistics in understanding human society lead to any view about the origins of language?*

LÉVI-STRAUSS: I would not dare answer. I believe, like Saussure, that linguistics has been the first corner-stone in laying a general *science of semeiology* in which anthropology and other human sciences will have to play their part. We are progressively working closer together. So the problem about the origin of language is not about language itself. It is about the use of signs. Signs can be words, but they can also be women, women for instance as signs of alliance between groups; signs can be goods and services. The real problem about the origin of language is to understand how the same stimulus became twofold, as something which was valued by the owner of the stimulus—with the realisation that it was also valued by the receiver, that it is possible to get something more by giving him my stimulus and getting his in exchange. This exchange is the act of communication.

—Our currency has to be agreed to by both parties.

LÉVI-STRAUSS: That's right. Now in my opinion this is not at the moment a problem for the anthropologist or the sociologist. It is a problem about the evolution of the brain, about something which took place in the neurological system and which did not exist before. If the problem of the origin of language can be solved, it will be solved by physiologists and not by us.

—I hear in your answer a return to a classic 18th-century materialism.

LÉVI-STRAUSS: Yes, but with a qualification. The reason why it has been necessary, especially for anthropologists and sociologists—I am thinking of the classical relation between Nature and Culture—to break with 18th-century materialism, is that anthropologists were aware that there were in Culture a great many principles at work which didn't exist in Nature, but in Nature such as it was conceived in the 18th or 19th century. Recently a tremendous change, I would even say a revolution, has taken place in our conception of nature. It has become more and more apparent that in order to understand the deeper operations of nature it is necessary to call on a cultural model. Let us take the genetic code, as a very simple and obvious example. The gap is not at all as big now between nature and culture as it was necessary to assume some years ago. Not on account of there being more nature in culture than we previously thought, but the other way round: because there is much more culture in nature.

—Your point about the brain would lead logically to the idea that as human history has been very short, speaking physiologically, there is a common syntax of perception, possibly of dreams, which underlies any cultural difference, brain structure being necessarily universal.

LÉVI-STRAUSS: I would agree to the extent that we limit the statement to formal properties and avoid any implication of images or content. Then this would be true in exactly the same way as it is true that there are a great many languages in the world, but that they share some fundamental principles of operation. These make them languages; that is, they can be translated.

—But this again, I think, anchors your thought in certain 18th-century aspects, such as Leibniz and his notion of a universal grammar.

LÉVI-STRAUSS: No doubt about that, no doubt.

—May I turn to the work which you now are engaged upon? In that extraordinary opening section of Le Cru et le Cuit (*The Raw and the Cooked*), *where you sum up so much of your recent thinking on language, we come to the statement that music is the "supreme mystery of the science of man, the mystery against which the science must necessarily butt its head, and the mystery which keeps the key to the progress of the science of man...." What thought were you developing there?*

LÉVI-STRAUSS: Well, two aspects, a minor and a major one. Let me begin with the minor aspect. There is a very embarrassing problem about music: there are senders of music, the composer, and there are receivers, the whole of mankind. There is a big difference with respect to language, to articulated speech. The senders and the receivers are exactly as numerous as each other. But with music the number of senders is extremely restricted while the number of receivers is very large. And so there is a problem of a language which is not working as a language should. The second problem, the major aspect, well, this is more or less the same, phrased somewhat differently. We all know that music is a means of communication. When we listen to music we communicate with the composer; we communicate with the musicians themselves; and we communicate together in sharing the same emotion between members of the audience. But this kind of language cannot

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be translated into anything else, except itself. You can translate music into music. You can shape the melody from major to minor. You can even devise a mathematical equation which will permit you to change according to a certain rule the interval between the notes of the melody and it will be a translation of the melody. But you cannot translate music into speech; if you do, you reach the kind of phraseology which does not convey anything of the message of the music itself. This raises, of course, an enormous problem exactly akin to the problem raised by mythology—because there have also been attempts to translate myth into something which is not mythology. But what you arrive at are generally platitudes of the worst kind. Myths are translations of one another, and the only way you can understand a myth is to show how a translation of it is offered by a different myth. So there is something very similar between mythology and music.

—You spoke of sharing the musical experience. Does not ethno-musicology suggest that musical experiences are highly specific to individual cultures? You write: "Music, the only language, both untranslatable and immediately understandable." Is this so? Isn't music understandable only to very specialised groups who know the syntax of the music of a particular culture?

Lévi-Strauss: I was speaking only of music within a culture. But I was not claiming that any kind of music is understandable to any audience.

—The fact that it can be translated into no other medium also means it cannot be translated into another idiom.

Lévi-Strauss: Yes. The same is true for mythology, because you cannot make mythology understood by somebody of a different culture without teaching him the rules and the particular traditions of that culture.

—But whereas musical modes do not seem to appear to be the same in many parts of the world, surely the same myths, the same recognisable structures, do appear.

Lévi-Strauss: Well, at that level I don't know. There are probably the same mythical structures recurring here and there. But I would not claim that they are the same everywhere. It is quite possible that when we have made sufficient progress in the study of mythology we shall arrive at the conclusion that there are several species, and not only one. This I don't know yet.

—Do I read in your own feelings about music and in the fact that you have given to the first volume of Le Cru et le Cuit *a musical structure (even entitling the different parts as if they were sonatas, variations, cadenzas, arpeggios and so on) a feeling that music is going to become terribly important for our Western technological culture, perhaps in a way that is not yet quite clear? That it will become an increasingly vital reserve of meaning and feeling?*

Lévi-Strauss: I would not over-labour the musical aspect of *Le Cru et le Cuit*. In some cases there is a good reason. In others—it's a joke. If I have called one part of the book "Sonata" it is only because I found it exceedingly boring. But to answer the important aspect of your question. Yes, there is a very close link between *concrete thought* and music. Music has to be played by musical instruments. These are concrete objects. It seems to me that in the modern dodecaphonic or serial music this aspect is becoming more and more important: the use of the specific *timbre* of each instrument as a kind of material object.

—If the brain structure and its physiological uniformities are so evident, I am still puzzled why music should be so various. Not just diverse in different parts of the world, but that modes and intervals and basic musical concepts should not reflect the uniformity of the brain?

Lévi-Strauss: No, there is no problem there. After all, if we claim that there is a basic uniformity it does not mean that within this uniformity a great many different combinations cannot take place. Of course it is difficult for us because we are poorly informed—and only for that reason—to take pleasure in listening to music whose syntax we do not know. After all, if Debussy had not derived an immense pleasure from listening to Indonesian music we would not have Debussy. The frontiers are not at all as strict as you suggest. Nevertheless I do believe that ethno-musicology will be able some day to provide us with a universal grammar of music. This, of course, will not be as rich as the individual grammar of each music, but will nevertheless give us the basic principles from which to derive and appreciate the peculiar structure of each individual music.

—If the computer will be able to programme all possible cultural combinations, could the electronic musician one day realise all possible modes of music?

Lévi-Strauss: If electronic musicians sought to understand what music is instead of trying to produce it, we would make tremendous progress towards solving the problem which music sets the science of man.

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SCIENCE

Physics and Man's Understanding

By Robert Oppenheimer

WE ARE HERE to celebrate a birthday, honouring the foresight of a man, and the success of a great institution. This makes it fitting that we leave to one side the common plaints of our time: that physics is corrupted by money; microbiology and mathematics by pride, not unrelated to achievement; astrophysics and geophysics by access to novel and powerful instruments of exploration; the arts by alienation; and all by our lack of virtue. What truth there is, and there is some, to these anxieties is not for us today. Let me begin with Joseph Henry, the first Secretary of this Institution: "Knowledge should not be viewed as existing in isolated parts but as a whole, each portion of which throws light on the other... the tendency of all is to improve the human mind... for they all contribute to sweeten, to adorn, and to embellish life." When we think back on the prolonged and troubled debates with which the Congress moved towards accepting Smithson's bequest, establishing this Institution, we can only be moved to celebrate the extent to which it has managed to preserve and enlarge, not perhaps the unity, but the harmony between the sciences, between the arts and sciences, between nature and man, and between knowledge and practice.

Physics has played a part in the history of the Smithsonian, as indeed it has in the history of the last five centuries. Closely related to astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy in its earlier years, it now has intimate relations also with all branches of science, and plays an increasingly explicit, conscious, and visible role in the changing conditions of man's life. But it does not have the kind of unity which Smithson himself proclaimed: "The particle and the planet are subject to the same laws, and what is learned of one will be known of the other." What we have seen in a great agon of this century is that the laws are indeed profoundly different; but again there is harmony between them, and, of course, consistency.

If physics has had these extended relations with science and practice, it has still maintained a kind of central heart of its own. This is because it seeks the ideas which inform the order of nature, and of what we know of nature. Countless phenomena which, from the point of view of physics, appear calculable and explicable but not central or essential, turn out to be pivots of our understanding in other sciences. No *a priori* study of physics would have been likely to explain the accidents that make the synthesis of carbon in the stars possible. Yet that has made a difference of some importance to man. Most of the miraculous findings of microbiology were not invented, and would not have been invented, by physicists, though they have played an appropriate part in helping to provide the instruments and the language for their discovery. For every science, much is accident; for every science sees its ideas and order with a sharpness and depth that comes from choice, from exclusion, from its special eyes.

THESE CENTURIES, from the first inspired studies in the 13th century of the nature of motion, to the latest journal or even latest newspaper, have been sensed as a time of change, often painful change, of novelty, and, increasingly, of rapid growth. What is written today deploring change, or welcoming it, has its parallel in almost every

THE SMITHSONIAN in Washington has recently celebrated the 200th anniversary of the birth of James Smithson, the British scientist whose bequest to the United States in 1846 founded the renowned Institution. Professor Oppenheimer, who is the director of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton (and former director of the wartime atomic establishment at Los Alamos) made these remarks in Washington on that occasion.

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decade for the last 400 years, in Newton, in the dying Galileo, in John Donne. "'Tis all in peeces, all cohaerence gone," wrote Donne in 1611:

And new Philosophy calls all in doubt,
The Element of fire is quite put out;
The Sun is lost, and th'earth, and no man's wit
Can well direct him where to looke for it.
And freely men confesse that this world's spent,
When in the Planets, and the Firmament
They seeke so many new; then see that this
Is crumbled out againe to his Atomies.
'Tis all in peeces, all cohaerence gone;
All just supply, and all Relation.

But there is one very great difference. What has happened in this century in physics rivals, I think, in its technical and intellectual imaginativeness and profundity, what has happened at any time in human history. Its effects on the way we live are even more immediate and manifest than was the use of the magnet for navigation, or of electricity for communication and power, but it has not led to so great a change in man's views, of his place in the world, his function, his nature and his destiny.

THE YEARS from the 13th century to the 17th saw the gradual acceptance of a material world no longer centred on man, or on his habitat, the gradual acceptance of an order in the heavens that could be described and comprehended, that sharply limited and circumscribed, though of course it did not eliminate the role of God, or indeed of accident. We should ask ourselves, I think, why the views of Copernicus, the discoveries of Galileo, the understanding and syntheses of Newton, should so greatly have resonated through European society, so greatly altered the words with which men spoke of themselves and their destiny. For nothing like that has happened with Hubble's discovery of a constant in nature, an interval of time of something like 10 billion years, which characterises the time in which galaxies double their distance from one another. Nothing like that happened with Einstein's theory of relativity, which tells us the meaning of velocity of light, or of quantum theory, which tells us of the meaning of the quantum. In more recent times, there is a similar contrast between the impact of the views of Darwin, and the almost total lack of general interest in Mendel's discovery of binomial coefficients in the populations of succeeding generations of peas, its rediscovery, its more recent beautiful deepening, with the great beginnings of the unravelling of its molecular basis.

TO GIVE some sharpness to my question, let me speak a little of a few of the high points of this century's physics. There are many: the discovery of new forms of order, and their very slow and gradual understanding, in the superfluid and super-conducting states of matter; the discovery of the atomic nucleus itself, and the gradual unravelling of its properties, transmutations, and structure; the growing insight into the properties of the ordinary materials of our world, and of special ones made to serve us. But I should like to talk of three, which at first sight seem to touch upon themes long irresistible to philosophers: the special theory of relativity, quantum theory, and particle physics. I should hasten to add that the third subject is open.

There is an analogy, long known to physicists, between the special theory of relativity and the quantum theory. Each is built about a constant of nature and has something to say about how that constant, in determining the laws of nature, restricts or enlarges our ability to learn about nature. I shall not speak of Einstein's theory of gravitation, which he called the general theory of relativity, largely because those parts of it which are assured and understood and, in part, checked by observation, were so clearly and indelibly described by Einstein that we are still not able to add much; and because those parts where Einstein felt some hesitation, or those others where no real test has so far been clearly at hand, those parts which deal with space in the very large or with truly strong gravitational fields, are still the province of the professional physicist and the astronomer.

As we all know, Einstein's first theory of relativity made clear an unexpected meaning of a constant of nature long ago determined by the astronomers, the velocity with which light propagates in empty space. It was Maxwell who showed that this constant was the same as that relating fundamental electric and magnetic units, and explained why this should be so, by showing that light is an electro-magnetic wave. Einstein's role was to recognise that because of the universal validity of Maxwell's equation, and the independence of the velocity of light of the velocity of the source emitting it, this velocity must, itself, take on the role of what in earlier times was regarded as an infinite one, one which could not be surpassed. The corresponding limitations, the absence of absolute judgments of simultaneity at distant points, struck rather deep at all views of space and time ever held before. At the same time, they liberated physics to form new and consistent descriptions of nature, and by altering and refining Newtonian mechanics, to anticipate new inter-connections of the most fundamental theoretical and practical import.

IN SOME WAYS EVEN more remarkable was the interpretation of Planck's constant, the quan-

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tum, that emerged from the development of the quantum theory of the atom, the work this time of many men, initiated in part by Einstein, in part by Bohr, and brought to an essential clarity by Bohr and his Copenhagen school. Here, again, physics was given a great liberation, the ability to understand the stability of atoms, the atomicity of matter, the regularities of chemistry, the atomic and molecular requirements for life, most of what physicists and chemists had known until the turn of the century. But here, again, it was discovered that the role of the quantum in the order of nature limited the traditional concepts of what we could learn about nature by experience. The quantum defines the irreducible roughness in the relations between a system being studied and the physical means—light, or beams of particles, or a gravitational field, for instance—that are used to study it. Because of this, there is an atomicity not only to the atoms and molecules, but to the traffic between them and the physical instruments of the laboratory; and, because of this, a complementary relation of mutual incompatability between different sorts of observations on an atomic system.

From this follow all the well-known features: the ineluctable element of chance in atomic physics based, not on our laziness, but on the laws of physics; the end of the Newtonian paradigm of the certain predictions of the future from the knowledge of the present; the element of choice in the approach to atomic observation. Yet perhaps the most important lesson is that objective—and massively and beautifully successful—science could be based on a situation in which many of the traditional features of objectivity were absent, and which taught us that for scientific progress and understanding, objectivity is more closely related to our ability to describe to one another what we have done and found, to verify or refute, than to its ontological foundation.

As FOR particle physics, it is an unfinished story, and what we are sure of to-day may not yet be ready to make its contribution to the common culture. Just from the requirement that in these new domains the general principles embodied in an understanding of the quantum and the velocity of light should still apply, it follows, as has been known for more than three decades, that atoms, or particles, or the ingredients of atoms, could not themselves, as all philosophical atomists had thought, be the permanent, unchanging elements of nature. They are created, destroyed, transmuted, but do not remain unaltered. What do remain enduring are certain abstract attributes of particles, of which the electric charge is the most familiar, and of which two other examples are known: the number of proton-like particles minus the number of their anti-particles, and the same number for electron-like particles. As for the several other abstract quantities, such as *strangeness* or *hypercharge*, and *isotopic spin* that do change, but remarkably slowly, we, I think, and I, I know, are not ready to tell philosophers of what we have made of it. This is not for lack of trying. But at the least, we have a rather unexpected alteration of the ancient atomists' answer to the problem of permanence and change. What lies ahead, we do not know. In the tumult of discovery and conjecture I have, myself, great hope; but whether we will be led, as has been so long speculated, to some further limits on what we can say about events in space and time on the scale of the very small, or whether the true shock will be far more shocking, I, at least, have an open mind. It may, though we hope not, and I believe not, be like *The Beast in the Jungle*.

THERE IS at least one other relatively new set of discoveries which may teach us rather deep lessons. No one was prepared for the power of the radio galaxies, or the apparently fantastic luminosity of the quasi-stellar objects. Some have thought that we were seeing the effects of truly strong gravitational fields; but until we understand better how such effects could lead to what is observed, until we understand better why galaxies are so much more effective in converting energy to radio emission than the sun is, or than we on earth are, this had best be left in the province of the professionals.

Now these, like other discoveries of this century, past and still to be made, find their way into our schools and become part of the language and the insight of new generations, and provide new attitudes and new analogies in looking at problems outside of physics, outside of science, as has already so largely happened with classical mechanics and with electricity. But it is clear that these discoveries, which were not easy to make and which, to the professionals involved, brought a sense of terror as great as that which touched Newton, have clearly not changed our philosophy, either in the formal sense or in the homely one. They were unexpected and beautiful discoveries for whose general import Locke and Hume, above all Charles Peirce, and even William James, could have prepared us.

I have sometimes asked myself when a discovery in science would have a large effect on beliefs which are not, and may perhaps never be, a part of science. It has seemed clear that unless the discoveries could be made intelligible they would hardly revolutionise human atti-

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tudes. But it has also seemed likely that unless they seemed relevant to some movement of the human spirit characteristic of the day, they would hardly move the human heart or deflect the philosopher's pen. I now think that it can be put more simply. These syntheses, these new discoveries which liberated physics, have all rested on the correction of some common view which was, in fact, demonstrably in error: they have all rested on a view which could not be reconciled with the experience of physics. The shock of discovering this error, and the glory of being free of it, have meant much to the practitioners. Five centuries ago the errors that physics and astronomy and mathematics were beginning to reveal were errors common to the thought, the doctrine, the very form and hope of European culture. When they were revealed, the thought of Europe was altered. The errors that relativity and quantum theory have corrected were physicists' errors, shared a little, of course, by our colleagues in related subjects.

A RECENT VIVID EXAMPLE is the discovery of the non-conservation of parity. The error which this corrected was limited to a very small part of mankind. There is a still more recent example, the non-conservation of combined parity, more limited still in the number of us who could be shocked by it, not yet understood, but with hopeful, though still unpublished and unverified, indications of its possible deeper meaning.

Thus, I think, it is true that only at the beginnings of a science, or only in a society in which an awareness of the problems of science is extraordinarily widespread, can its discoveries start great waves of change in human culture. Just possibly if, in years ahead, other examples, other forms, other sites of life should be discovered, we would have a valid analogy to the great shock of the last century, when the anthropologists showed us the unimagined variety of human institutions. Although the 19th-century discoveries in biology had gone far to relate man to other forms of life, although anthropologists had revealed the unanticipated diversity of beliefs, values, and practices in different cultures, and the lack of universality of the ideals by which our own society had been nourished, although the psychologists had brought some supplement to the great religions in revealing again the universal traits of evil in all men, in fact these discoveries were to deepen and not to erode the sense of a universal human community.

IF THE IMPACT of the developments in physics in this century on the general understanding of man has been restricted, quiet, and largely reserved for the young and the future, their practical consequences, along with those of all the natural and mathematical sciences, have been unrivalled in their sharpness and immediacy. I should like to speak of one, which is not isolated, in which, largely by accidents of history, the part of physics has been important: the new weaponry, the new situation of the nations and of war.

It is still not clear in what way, or even whether, these developments will turn out to be important for human history. I should think it likely that they would be. These developments, and problems that they raise, cannot be lived out in isolation from all the others which characterise our time, but only concurrently. But they can be talked about in a certain isolation.

It is twenty years ago that men generally learned of the new weapons of a new order of destructiveness. At this time we knew and told our government (as no doubt experts in other countries knew and told theirs) that the bombs that cruelly, yet decisively, ended the Second World War were, from a technical point of view, very much a beginning, not an end. We thought of some ideas about using deuterium and ordinary uranium to increase their power a thousand-fold; we thought of the probable appropriateness of delivering such objects by rocket. We did not know too much about it; but within a decade, rather much had been learned.

When I think back to the summer and the autumn of 1945, I remember a number of views of the future which were formulated in this country, and, despite preoccupation with recovery from the terrible war, no doubt abroad. The simplest, and the only one which has been decisively refuted, was that these weapons would remain a monopoly, and thus either play very little part, or put to the test only the restraint, compassion, and fortitude of our own people and government. This was not my colleagues' view, of course, nor mine; but for a time, at least, it was that of many, including some of the very highest officers of our government.

Others pointed to the long history of warfare, and talked of a defence against atomic bombs. In no meaningful sense has this characterised any period of the last two decades. As long as the armaments race continues, we will have to ask and re-ask whether adequate new defences may be possible. They have not been. Thus, we have lived these years with a complementary and opposed dependence on pre-emption and deterrence.

Others, looking to past history, trying to look to the future, saw only the certain eventuality of apocalyptic war, postponed in all likelihood

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by the efforts of statesmanship until it was quite total. This is one forecast that history will never totally disprove. And still others, looking to the past with their eyes, and trying to penetrate the future, held, with Sir Llewellyn Woodward, that such self-defeating weapons would be put to one side, leaving the nations to war on one another with more limited means. There is some support for it in the wars of the present hour.

YET THERE WERE quite other thoughts. Colonel Stimson wrote of *the necessary government of the whole*; and Mr. Grenville Clark then as now tried to accommodate the needs of world order with the freedom, the diversity, and the self-interest of the world's peoples; Einstein said simply that world government was the only answer. As for the Acting Secretary of State, the more importunate appeals led him to suggest that it was not always helpful to replace a difficult problem by an insoluble one.

Most of us recognised how central the relations with the Soviet Union would be, and, very soon, how ominous their course. Most of us recognised that with any *government of the whole* capable of serving as a vehicle for common aspirations, for expressing and advancing common interests, the extraordinary diversity of the nations and regions and peoples of the world would present hard problems. There were rich people, and there were very poor people; in any common society these inequalities would more and more become inequities, and the inequities more and more the source of grievance and of guilt. Even in that world which had long lived with the European heritage, with a deep—though changing—Christian sensibility, differences of history, differences of political practice, and conflicting assessments of the value and meaning of freedom, made talk of the world's community of interest rather a falsetto clarion. We did not then know, but we should have, that in vast parts of the world, in Asia, in Africa, the first, the most powerful, the most spectacular of Europe's legacy would be the lure of technology, the pleasure of privilege, and the delights of an often synthetic nationalism. We knew that the rich could not, if they would, and perhaps would not, quickly reverse the inequities in conditions of life among peoples. We knew that for the world's future the variety of historical experience, the differences of tradition, of culture, of language and the arts, should be protected and preserved. This left very little of the idea of government of the whole; but it did leave something.

IN JUNE of 1945, before the first bomb, four of us, Arthur Compton, Fermi, Lawrence, and I, wrote, in answer to questions put to us by Colonel Stimson, the Secretary of War:

> To accomplish these ends [the rapid and in human life the least costly end of the war, and the preservation of the future peace of the world], we recommend that before the weapons are used not only Britain, but also Russia, France, and China be advised that we would welcome suggestions as to how we can co-operate in making this development contribute to improved international relations.

These views were endorsed by the Secretary of War's Interim Committee on Atomic Energy, though the Committee, of course, paid little attention at that moment to France, and to China.

But in fact no meaningful communication was made at all: no attempt to enlist our then allies in a common responsibility and a common concern. That would have been a moment to begin to worry about what is now called "nuclear proliferation," for we and our then allies are the five powers that to-day have a known nuclear military programme. I think that we will not be very successful in discouraging other powers from this course unless we show, by our own example and conviction, that we regard nuclear armaments as a transitory, dangerous, and degrading phase of the world's history, that before other nations could have a competing armament, there is a good chance that armament will have become archaic.

In writing as we did in 1945, and then, of course, very much more later, we were not unaware of the diversity of condition, interest, philosophy, and political institutions even in the great powers of the world, and certainly in the world at large. But we did know one thing from our experience before and even during the war: we knew something of the universality of the practice, language, discourse, and ethos of science. Los Alamos, and other wartime laboratories, were indeed international institutions. For years before the end of the war, those responsible for the organisation of the scientific effort in the United States—Vannevar Bush, James Conant, and many others—had been speaking of the hope of an international control of the new weapons, and a co-operative exploitation of the new sciences. Similar views were widely held in Britain. Sir John Anderson, who was the head of the United Kingdom Uranium Project, was persuaded of them. Most of all, Niels Bohr explored these possibilities in depth, recognising that any such co-operation and any such control would have to rest on open access in all countries, and recognising that this was

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the best guarantee against the self-delusion and the cultural and political and human abuses of societies that seal themselves off from their fellow-men.

THE YEARS SINCE the war have brought many examples of effective and fruitful international collaboration, in technology, in political economy, above all in the sciences. My own field just in the last years has been enriched by contributions of the greatest value from physicists whose countries a century ago were quite closed to the scientific tradition of Europe: Korea, Japan, China, Indo-China, to name a few. We need to be grateful for the strength and beauty of this tradition, and to tremble as well as take heart in its power. These same years have also shown how modest, how fitful and inconstant, how easily overwhelmed has been the effect of these international communities on the nations and the governments.

If I recall at this time some notions of two decades ago, it is clearly because I believe them essential to our present and our future. For I see it as a crucial question of our time whether, in a world destined at best slowly to relieve the inequities of rich and poor, the exploitation of military technology, of national pride, of privilege, will be met by the growth, in practice, in sensibility, in institutions, of a community of interest and understanding. In the discouragements of the day, good example must come to be our firmest ground for hope.

Enigma

the root of a tree swallows my shape
a stone pricks my finger
and pressing scratches on my brain
my eyes become prey to leaves
owls hide in my eyelashes
my steps abolish themselves
they precipitate
they become openings in the monuments of bushes
a butterfly sips my whole being
sparks and smoke pour out of my nostrils
like coral dragons of old days
i am like thistle in the grass
whirlpools forget me and deny me
flowers stick out their tongue at me
parapets supplant me
i hate springs and i silverplate their will
i am the favourite of waves like pebbles
i refuse to retreat before the wind
or melt in kilns of heatbaths
or char like crab on charcoal
i make superhuman efforts to speak
to save myself
from the fire which i myself have lit
i glitter like a diamond but i am not a star
what am i then if i am not what i am?
heavenly body or earthly?
solid liquid or gas?

Nanos Valaoritis
translated by Nikos Stangos

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POETRY

On Boris Pasternak

By Andrei Sinyavsky

LANDSCAPE in Pasternak's work often becomes not the object of a representation but the subject of an action, the principal hero and mover of events. All the fullness of life in its varied aspects enters a scrap of nature which it seems can perform actions, feel and think. The assimilation of nature to man which is characteristic of poetry goes so far with Pasternak that the landscape takes on the role of preceptor and moral example. *"The forest drops its crimson attire"*[1] holds as the classical formulation in Russian poetry for autumn. With Pasternak we often meet this thought in reverse: *"You throw off your dress/just as the copse throws off its leaves"; "You are undesigning like the air"*—the poet addresses his beloved. Man is defined through nature, by comparison with her he assumes his place in the world. This power or more properly intercession of nature does not humiliate man since by submission and assimilation to her he follows the voice of life. Moreover in Pasternak's art nature is so close to man that being dislodged and superseded by nature he comes to life in her anew. Here the degree of the world's humanisation is such that wandering through forests and fields we have to do actually not with pictures of these forests and fields but with their character and psychology.

Pasternak's poetry is metaphorical through and through. But often one is less aware of these similitudes as metaphor than as something vividly at work before our eyes. Quite literally "the garden weeps" or "the storm runs"; they are presented most convincingly as indeed acting like this:

The storm is at the gates! outside!
Transfigured and dazed
In darkness, in thunder-peals, in silver,
It runs down the gallery.

Metaphor in Pasternak's poetry has chiefly a linking role. Instantly and dynamically it draws into a single whole the discrete parts of reality and thereby bodies forth the great unity of the world, the interaction and interpenetration of things. Pasternak's starting-point is that two objects when juxtaposed have a close interaction, penetrate each other, and so he connects them not by resemblance but proximity. The world is described "whole," and the job of unifying it falls to metaphor:

Spring, I am from the street, where
the poplar is astonished,
Where the distance is scared, where
the house fears to fall,
Where the air is dark blue like
the bundle of linen
Of a man discharged from hospital.

The last line shows why "the distance is scared" and "the house fears to fall": they too have just been discharged from hospital like the man whose bundle made the air blue.

Landscape—more widely still, the whole ambient world—gains with Pasternak a heightened sensitivity. It reacts sharply and instantly to the changes that go on in man, not merely in response to his feelings, thoughts and moods (a thing common enough in literature) but becoming his full likeness, an extension, his *alter ego*. The mechanism of these changes is revealed in Pasternak's prose story *The Last Summer*:

> Of course the whole alley in its utter gloom was fully and entirely Anna. Here Seryozha wasn't alone and he knew this. And indeed this had happened to all sorts of people before him. However the feeling was still more spacious and precise, and here the help of friends and predecessors stopped. He saw how painful it was for Anna to be the morning in town.... In silence she looked lovely before him, and did not call for his aid. And faint with longing for the real Arild . . . he saw how surrounded with poplars like frozen towels she was sucked in by the clouds and slowly tossed backwards her gothic brick towers.

Notice: the feeling that seizes Seryozha was *more spacious and precise* than similar things experienced by others. For here Pasternak speaks of himself.

[1] First line of a poem written by Pushkin in 1825.

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The Invisible Poet

THE TASK that fascinated Pasternak was to re-create within the limits of verse the all-embracing atmosphere of existence, to communicate "the sense of intimacy with the universe" that possessed the poet. In his verse the lyrical narrative does not proceed in order from one thing to the next but leaps "above the barriers,"[2] tending towards an exquisite breadth, a bold depiction of the whole. Things are shifted by metaphor from their long-occupied places and come into violent chaotic movement, the purpose of which is to set down reality in its natural disorder:

I want to go home, to the vastness
Of the flat which induces grief.
I shall enter, take off my overcoat, collect myself,
I shall be illumined by the street lights.
The thin sides of partitions
I shall pass through, pass through like light,
Pass through as image enters image
And as object cuts across object.

In this immaterial space intersected by metaphors the poet holds a peculiar position. Except in a few works he does not stand out developed as a fully independent and separate character. He differs from Blok, Tsvetaeva, Mayakovsky, Esenin, in that he rarely assigns the lyrical part to the first person. With them the poet's personality stood at the centre, and his art extending into a diary of many years, a tale "about the time and oneself," composed a kind of saga, a dramatic biography enacted before the eyes of its readers and surrounded with an aureole of legend. Pasternak departs from this conception which he designates as "romantic," the "idea of a poet's biography as a spectacle." He has little to say about himself or in his own person, and takes trouble to hide his ego out of the way. When reading his poetry you have at times the illusion that the author doesn't come into it,

[2] The title of Pasternak's second collection of verse (1917).

THE *Soviet edition of Pasternak's poetry which came out in Moscow last summer has a long introduction—some fifty pages in small print—by Andrei Sinyavsky. Three years before this he had reviewed an earlier and less complete edition in* Novy Mir. *Sinyavsky has published other literary criticism. Again in* Novy Mir *he wrote a short piece on Anna Akhmatova—"A Voice Unfettered" (1964). A few months earlier in the same journal he had reviewed a translation of Robert Frost's poems. In 1964 he was co-author (with A. Menshutin) of a book on Russian poetry in the years 1917–20. The recent essay on Pasternak must take its place among the best accounts of this poet's work to be found anywhere.*

Sinyavsky could not, of course, quote from the still unpublished Doctor Zhivago; *although sixteen of Yuri's poems appear in this Soviet edition, the very significant religious ones are missing. Even so the introduction presents an authoritative view of Pasternak. The* Essay in Autobiography *(London, 1959) has not been published in Russia but was available to Sinyavsky among the poet's papers. He quotes from another manuscript a passage about the revolutionary summer of 1917 which is echoed in* Doctor Zhivago. *Pasternak tells how "together with people the roads, trees and stars held their meetings and orated...." Yuri used much the same words in conversation with Lara at Melyuzeyevo.*

Sinyavsky's introduction is too long to print here in its entirety. It has an amplitude foreign to the Western reader of literary criticism. Not since the time of Zamyatin and Mandelshtam (unless we count Pasternak himself) have Russian writers sought to concentrate their criticism in a few telling pages. Sinyavsky works systematically and makes everything explicit.

The problem before Sinyavsky was to show the relevance of a poet who had nothing of the tribune in him, whose views were old-fashioned in their idealism, and whose poetry during the first half of his career had been difficult and wayward. Mayakovsky, so much his opposite for all the technical resemblances at the time, insisted when Pasternak first gained notice that here was "a new poetry with a magnificent feeling for the present day." Yet this awareness (even though in the 'twenties Pasternak had joined LEF, *the movement for agitational poetry) seldom took a direct form. His public poems—"Nineteen-Five" or "Lieutenant Schmidt"—to a certain extent forced his genius in the wrong direction. The true Pasternak is to be found elsewhere: in all that developed from his volume of lyrics* My Sister Life *(1922). Sinyavsky is right in declaring that this book affirmed his beliefs about poetry and life, which never essentially changed. The art itself had to be made over anew during the 'thirties, until the poet—helped, perhaps, by continuous translating—had achieved the simplicity of his final years.*

Sinyavsky in the attempt to disclose "the individual world of Pasternak" is concerned principally with three things—his philosophy, his poetic language, his imagery. At the centre is nature. Pasternak made this a perennial subject of his poetry, and in describing nature, as Sinyavsky comments, he affirmed his personal faith in life. Sinyavsky sees him as "for ever overwhelmed and enchanted by his discovery: 'Spring has come back.'..."

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that he is absent even as narrator and as a witness who has seen all that is here depicted. Nature speaks in its own name:

In the open windows on their handiwork
Dovelike the clouds sat down.
They noticed the water had made thin
The fences—markedly, the crosses—slightly.

Not the poet but "the clouds noticed." . . .

In one of Pasternak's late poems, "First Frost," we again encounter just such an unusual image in which landscape and spectator seem to have exchanged roles and the picture itself looks at the man standing in front of it:

This cold morning the hazy sun
Stands like a pillar of fire in smoke.
I too, as in an awful snapshot,
Simply can't be made out by it.

Until it issues from the mist
Shining beyond the pond on the meadow
The trees can't see me properly
On the distant bank.

If Mayakovsky or Tsvetaeva wants to speak for all the world in their own person, Pasternak prefers that the world should speak for him and in his stead. "Not I about spring, but spring about me." "Not I about the garden, but the garden about me."

By the fence
Between damp twigs and the pallid air
A quarrel went on. My heart sank.
About me!

A New Poetic Language

"THE INABILITY to find and tell the truth," Pasternak declared, "is a defect which no ability to tell untruth can hide." Realism as he understood it—the heightened receptivity and honesty of the artist when he communicates real being which, like a living human character, is always entire and unique—inheres in all genuine art and shows in the work of Tolstoy and Lermontov, Chopin and Blok, Shakespeare and Verlaine. For Pasternak, on the other hand, romanticism was a negative idea, for it slips into the fantastic and easily neglects fidelity of expression.

His aesthetic views on this side are the more interesting because Pasternak for a long time was associated with a Futurist group and later with LEF. They went in extensively for the so-called formal method which treated a work of art as the sum of its technical procedures.

> The trends of today [Pasternak wrote early in the '20s] assume that art is a fountain when really it is a sponge. They have decided that art must spurt forth when really it must absorb and become saturated. They have reckoned that it may be broken down into the means of expression, when really it is made up of the organs of sensibility. It always has to stand with the spectators and look on the most purely, sensitively and accurately of all, but in our days it has come to know powder and the dressing-room, and to show itself from the stage. . . .

Art so understood premises a renewed vision of the world which is perceived by the artist as if for the first time. "The whole steppe, as before man fell."

In his search for new words that could restore its individual face to the world Pasternak turned to living conversational speech. He took part in that decisive democratisation of poetic language which in the 1910s and '20s affected many poets and ran with most turbulence in the work of Mayakovsky. Now Mayakovsky enlarged his vocabulary in the main by drawing on the language of the street which had begun to speak with its full voice, where vulgarisms alternated with the idiom of political speeches; and this was dictated by his enlargement of *theme* to include the city, the war, the revolution. Pasternak, however, kept for a long time to the circle of traditional themes well worn by poets of the past and present. Yet he spoke of traditional springs and sunsets in a new way; he told of natural beauty not in the language of the accustomed poetic banalities but in the current words of the everyday prose of life. Thereby he restored to it a lost freshness, an aesthetic significance. The trite subject in his rendering became a living event.

He introduces boldly into elevated poetic speech the low language of life, of the city in our time. Pasternak does not shrink from officialese, the licence of daily talk, conversational idioms. In their new application these forms, the worn change of everyday use, sound fresh and unexpected. Thus the set phrase in general currency becomes a weapon against literary *cliché*. Pasternak is inclined to treat the highest themes with a homely directness. The unquiet grandeur of the Caucasus he will convey with a simplicity in the tone of familiar everyday talk—*"it's out of sorts"*—or *"Caucasus seemed all spread on your palm,/All like a rumpled bed...."* His singularity is that he poeticises the world with the help of prosaisms, which infuse into his lines the truth of life.

Pasternak's innovation in language was largely dictated by the search for the greatest possible unfettering and naturalness of poetic expression. This was fully revealed and confirmed in his works of the '30s and particularly of the '40s and '50s. Then these tendencies, earlier hidden by Pasternak's irrepressible

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imagery, became clear and sharply intensified. Originally they were not obvious and acted as it were under cover. The author was fully aware of them, but seldom were they accessible to the reader. In this connection the poet wrote at the beginning of the '30s in his lyrical sequence *The Waves*:

Making sure of kinship with all that is
And familiar with the future in daily life
You are bound to fall into that heresy at last—
A strange simplicity.

But we may expect no mercy
So long as we do not hide it.
Men need it most of all
But are more at home with complexity.

"Complexity" here means the banal—the poetic stereotype. But simplicity is affirmed as the inner foundation, the spur and ultimate aim of his endeavours which had still to be realised.

The Sense of History

PASTERNAK called art "the extremity of an age" (and not its resultant) and he related works of art with historical events as kindred phenomena on different planes. Thus he thought Tolstoy kindred to the revolution. In his own book *My Sister Life* he saw a certain parallel with its revolutionary time and even counted it a book about the revolution, although it said nothing about social but just ordinary storms and sunrises, and to treat it in an allegorical spirit would do violence to the meaning.

None the less history came into Pasternak's work, even at the time when he demonstratively refused to touch it, pretending not to remember "what millennium, my dears, it is outside." Echoes of war and revolution rolled across a number of his landscapes, and history set its stamp on his representations of nature. This penetration of historical actuality into the realm of nature was nothing odd for the poet, since he rendered landscape through the perceptions of a contemporary city-dweller, who drags after him on his walk, along with the everyday quality of life, a chain of social and political references, involving the meadows and woods in the round of events among which his life passes.

In his representation and actual impression of history Pasternak comes close to Blok. This closeness results from their ability to catch the ground-rhythm of an epoch, not only in the obvious course of events lying on one plane but in all the departments of life; and from the poet's attempt to seek some common historical equivalent in all that goes on about him, and to show the world in the complete unity of its constituent parts, be they revolution, earthquake or love. Pasternak in his poems hastens to deduce a common denominator of human actions, sunsets, and city streets. And if, for example in "Lieutenant Schmidt," the subject is the time of the Russo-Japanese war, in fact the eve of revolution, then this troubled state of the world is reiterated by everything, even the Kiev racecourse. History penetrates all the pores of life, converting the smallest details of the environment into her likeness.

Hamlet and Human Destiny

THE IDEA that the individual human being has an exalted historical mission has been developed in Pasternak's poetry. From "Lieutenant Schmidt" where the moral ideal of man was made concrete in the character of the poem's protagonist (Schmidt sacrifices himself, performs a feat of historic renewal and accepts a tragic destiny as his due), through the lyric poetry of the '30s and the war period there run threads to the works of Pasternak that complete his career as artist. Their philosophical content may be disclosed from the remarks that Pasternak made about *Hamlet,* on a translation of which he was working:

> Hamlet renounces himself in order "to do the will of Him that sent him." *Hamlet* is not a drama of characterlessness but a drama of duty and self-renunciation. When it becomes plain that appearance and reality do not meet and are separated by a gulf, it is not material that the intimation of the world's delusiveness comes in supernatural form and the Ghost demands vengeance of Hamlet. It matters far more that by the will of chance Hamlet is chosen as judge of his time and servant of what is farther off. *Hamlet* is a drama of high destiny, of an enjoined feat and a mission entrusted.

The lyric poetry of the later Pasternak discloses to us the poet's position—with regard to the world and to time—in a rather different perspective from his work of former years. The idea of moral service here prevails over all else, though Pasternak does not cease to affirm the receptive power of poetry, its ability to seize a living picture of the actual (and the moral element in an artist's perception of the world even earlier was essential for him). If once in his aesthetic notions the image of "poetry as sponge" held the central place, now without cancelling the first another motif prevails: "the aim of art is self-surrender." Simultaneously at the end of the poet's life there is clarified in his art, and there sounds with full force, the consciousness of having accomplished his historic role. Hence in particular the uncommonly bright tonality of his late lyrics, despite the

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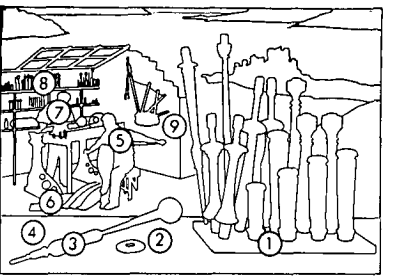
THE BAGPIPE MAKER



TUCKED AWAY IN OSNABURG STREET opposite the Market Cross in the Angus County Town of Forfar, is the thriving little bagpipe manufacturing business owned and worked by Bob Gillanders. Address: Osnaburg Street, Forfar. Perth (Shell Touring Map Number 7 from your, Shell Dealer).

The craft has been carried on in the Gillanders family for over 100 years. Bob took over the business from his father in 1930.

Rough sticks of specially selected African black-wood are turned on a special lathe, and emerge as intricately carved mouth-pieces, drones and chanters. In **1** you can see the components for the "pipes" stocks, lower joints, mid-pieces, top joints, blow-sticks and chanters. White ferrules and mounts are made of ivory, or imitation ivory. The bags are sewn together and covered in tartan, such as the Red Erskine **4**. The ivory mounts and the silver embellishments, like the engraved silver "sole" **2** for the bottom of the chanter **3** shown, are all hand-carved and engraved.

All these processes are carried out in Bob Gillanders' work-shop. Even the reeds are individually tuned to suit each particular set of bagpipes. This in itself requires great experience and it is not surprising to find that Bob is a competent piper. He is seen above **5** sewing up a bag using thread specially twisted from ten strands of Irish linen. Bags are made of sheepskin, or for the tropics, cowhide **6**.

The proof of the pipes **9** is in the playing. These hand-made instruments have been used by successful bands in Championship bids the world over. **7** shows Bob's eldest son, already a holder of several championships, turning parts **8** on a lathe.

Scotland has many such skilled craftsmen bringing centuries-old traditional techniques to bear on modern production problems. You can write for a list to the Scottish Country Industries Development Trust, 27 Walker Street, Edinburgh 3.

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Illustration : Claude Harrison R.P.

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The Nightclerk

STEPHEN SCHNECK *was winner of the* 1965 *Prix Formentor Fiction Award with this very funny and beautifully written first novel.*

Synopsis cannot possibly do justice to the wild collage Stephen Schneck has fashioned from this incredible array of ingredients. His work explodes from episode to episode like the Marx Brothers' film riots of fond memory. His book offers an outrageous parody of pornography and laughs away the pretension of all who take either themselves or literature too seriously

May, 21*s*

The Last Analysis

SAUL BELLOW'S *name is internationally known through his remarkable novel—"Herzog". Now comes his first play.*

"Why can't I live without hope like everybody else," cries Philip Bummidge to his analyst . . . himself. With the assistance of an ex-Bunny from the Playboy Club, an ex-ratcatcher, and a varied array of managers, deadbeats, cheats and charmers (all of them his relatives), Bummidge enacts his own Last Analysis in public.

Already published *Paperback* 12*s* 6*d*, *Hardcover*, 21*s*

I Want What I Want

GEOFF BROWN'S *book is a moving and exceptional first novel on transvestism.*

"I want what I want, not what other people think I ought to want", the hero of this strange and disturbing novel obstinately insists to all those who attempt to help him: to the psychiatrist at the mental hospital: to his baffled but affectionate sister whose clothes he has stolen: to his father, proprietor of a fish and chip shop, who is appalled that he has produced such a son—for what he wants to be is not a man but a woman.

Already published 25*s*

to come May 26

The Beginners

DAN JACOBSON *writes here at the height of his powers. "The Beginners" draws on the classic storytelling tradition and has been made the choice for the Literary Guild of America.*

Covering a period of almost sixty years, and with scenes set in South Africa, Israel, England and Eastern Europe, "The Beginners" is conceived on the largest scale and executed with an unflagging narrative and dramatic urgency. Directly or indirectly involved with the Glickmans—whose family fortunes the book is focused upon—are a host of other characters. Relatives, acquaintances, employees, lovers, all figure on this vast scene with its almost universal canvas.

30*s*

WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON

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tragic note of separate poems, and the prevailing sense of confidence in the future.

Both his ideas about morality and history and his understanding of the problems of art reveal traits, views, habits that approximate the poet to the present epoch and at the same time challenge certain of its assumptions and demands. "You are the outskirts (*prigorod*) and not a refrain (*pripev*)," Pasternak said about poetry. It seizes the actual and lies close in to it like the outskirts of a town, but—so Pasternak thinks—it does not repeat word for word the refrain of accepted truths.

The special way he understands the problem of art (in relation to nature, reality, its original) is so organic for Pasternak's vision that similar habits and conceptions are to be found in his translation work too.

It is not difficult to see that his ideas on the art of translation are very close to his ideas on art in general. He tries above all for "that conscious freedom without which you cannot come near to great things." Comparing his own work with the performance of other translators, Pasternak observes:

> We challenge no one with separate lines, but the contest is about entire structures, and in carrying them out, along with fidelity to the great original, we come to submit more and more to our own system of speech.
>
> An original should be related to its rendering as . . . the stock to a cutting. A translation should come from an author who has felt the influence of the original long before this work. It should be the fruit of the original and its historical consequence.

His translation of *Hamlet* appeared in a separate edition in 1941 and began a series of translations of Shakespeare's tragedies. But already in a poem of 1923 we meet the idea that was developed in his translation work: *"O, all Shakespeare perhaps is just in this,/That Hamlet converses freely with the Ghost."* To "converse freely"—*i.e.,* on the most elevated themes to speak unrestrainedly and colloquially—this we know was the rule with Pasternak, who had other traits allying him in his own fashion to the realism of Shakespeare, his freedom, picturesqueness, and so on. The "influence of the original" (of course not always direct, but often complicated and refracted in the various manifestations of world culture) here began long before his immediate work on Shakespeare's tragedies and in some measure fell in with his own interests and purposes as an artist. That is why Shakespeare transplanted so well in his poetic soil, and his work as translator, which felt the influence of the individual tastes, passions, and procedures of Pasternak the poet, had in its turn an influence on his original work.

"Impressionism of the Eternal"

THE MEANING of existence, the purpose of man, the essential nature of the world—these are the questions that excited Pasternak over many years, particularly at the end of his life.

This concern about essences, about the nature of things, puts the poet in a very interesting and ambiguous position with regard to impressionism, traces of which are to be seen in his work (especially of the early period). Pasternak's images at times recall the canvases of Monet and Renoir, Pissarro and Vuillard. Like these artists he often tries to set down his momentary impressions of objects and, hiding out of the way his previous knowledge of the world, to represent it as it is seen by him at the given moment. Here, for example, is a sketch fully in the spirit of impressionism:

The barman's dishes resounded.
The waiter yawned counting the crockery.
On the river, at the height of a candlestick,
Swarmed the fireflies.

They hung in a glittering thread
From the riverside streets. It struck three.
The waiter with a napkin tried to scrape off
Tallow grease that had appeared on the bronze.

Lights on shore, their reflection in the water, the waiter on the steamship—all this is taken in at a single glance which seeks only to absorb the picture suddenly revealed and to fix it in this position seen once "at the height of a candlestick."

But impressionism as a rule has to do with the sensuously perceived surface of an object, not with its essence. Drowning in a sea of colours and scents, it avoids *a priori* knowledge, concepts, and ideas that can trouble the purity of apprehension. Impressionism has no interest in eternal values.

Now it is curious that the young Pasternak, clearly going beyond impressionist ideas, should devise for himself such a formula for art as "impressionism of the eternal." It combines the poet's liking for an immediate apprehension of life, for pure colour painting, *plein air,* with his passion for the philosophical quest of absolute categories. So in his poetic images he tries to unite sensation and essence and describes "a storm, *momentary for ever. . . .*" The favourite "instant" of the impressionists is filled by Pasternak with so much significance that it tells no longer of the transient and unique, but of the constant and universal.

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Having achieved the simplicity he wanted, Pasternak kept also the most valuable of his former gains—that wholeness in the perception and representation of the world. But in the past the partitions between things, between man and nature, the temporary and the eternal, were overcome chiefly by aid of metaphor, shifting objects and signs from place to place and introducing at the same time a commotion, a babel of images. But now metaphor, while it continues to play an important connecting role, has ceased to be the sole mediator between things. Their unity is now achieved through that breadth and clarity of poetic vision, that winged inspiration of feeling and thought, before which every barrier falls, and life stands forth as a great whole where "nothing can be lost," where man lives and dies in the embrace of the universal, and the wind

> *Rocks forest and* dacha
> *Not each fir by itself,*
> *But all the trees absolutely*
> *With all the limitless expanse....*

In the work of the later Pasternak not only do the connection of things and the poet's unity with the world take more simple and direct forms than hitherto, but the very *"universe is simpler/Than some wily man may suppose,"* and it is founded on the supremacy of a few simple, elemental truths which everyone may understand—land, love, bread, sky. Sometimes a poem rests wholly on the affirmation of one such cornerstone in human existence. Together with this, ordinary life still more widely enters Pasternak's lyricism.

In half a century of Pasternak's writing much changed and re-fashioned itself. But to a series of ideas, principles, and partialities he remained faithful until the end. One of Pasternak's deep convictions was that true art is always greater than itself, for it testifies to the significance of being, the greatness of life, the immeasurable value of human existence. This witness can dispense with declarations, profound symbols and exalted allegories: the presence of greatness shows in the unaffected liveliness of what is being told, in the heightened awareness and poetic inspiration of the artist, who is possessed and stricken by the miracle of actuality itself and who tells constantly of one thing—of its notable presence, of life as it is, although the subject may be only the snow falling or the forest stirring.

The most sublime, as always with Pasternak, turns out to be the simplest—life which fills and exhausts everything. "Poetry," says Pasternak, "will always remain that celebrated height above all the Alps, which lies around in the grass at your feet, so that you need only bend down to see it and pick it up from the earth...."

Death in Ilium

Attention and power relax,
Truth deserts the body:
Hector among his books
Drops dead in the dust.

The tireless shadow-eaters
Close in with tough nose
And pale fang to expose
Fibre, weak flesh, speech organs.

They eat, but cannot eat.
Dog-faces in his bowels,
Bitches at his face,
He grows whole and remote.

Thomas Kinsella

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NOTES & TOPICS

Letter from Oxford

Electing a Poet

ON SATURDAY, 5 February, the M.A.s of Oxford University voted to decide who, for the next five years, should be their Professor of Poetry. The choice lay between Robert Lowell and Edmund Blunden. Mr. Blunden had entered the lists late; for some weeks, ever since it was known that Mr. Lowell had allowed his name to be put forward, most people had assumed that he would be elected automatically. In the event, Mr. Lowell received 241 votes, and Mr. Blunden 477. So Mr. Blunden is the Professor.

On the face of it, this is a surprising act of self-denial on the university's part. The outside world (by which I mean the one in every hundred thousand who takes cognisance of such matters) might well feel puzzled. How did such a result come about? As a resident of Oxford, with no connection with the university, I saw the affair from what could fairly be called a ringside seat, and I feel obliged to offer a few notes in elucidation.

The election was fairly widely covered by the newspapers, and some of the reporters who visited Oxford were so busy sorting out, or failing to sort out, the basic facts that they had no time left for the *nuances* of the situation. A few, such as John Gale in the *Observer*, captured the atmosphere skilfully and accurately. But one fact that did not appear, so far as I know, in any report, deserves to be emphasised at the very beginning. The Chair has recently changed its character. Some five years ago, a small pressure group went to work and succeeded in abolishing the rule that the Professor must be an Oxford M.A.

Why was this so important? The answer lies in the evolution of the Chair of Poetry itself. When it was first established in the 18th (not, as the *Sunday Times* would have it, in the 17th) century it was simply part of the syllabus organisation of those days; all it called for was a don who was prepared to lecture on the history of poetry. It was the election of Matthew Arnold that changed the tradition; from then on, it was hardly possible to ignore the fact that a really distinguished poet and critic, from outside the university, could contribute a great deal by accepting the Chair. The idea slowly entered the academic consciousness that this Chair, instead of being a small university perquisite (like being a Proctor, say) was in fact an instrument whereby the effectiveness of the university, as a centre of civilisation, could be increased.

From that point on, with many stumblings and lurchings, and not a few alarmed scuttlings backwards, the Chair of Poetry has advanced to the point at which it has become an object of interest to people everywhere who have any interest in poetry. The Oxford Professor of Poetry is brought into contact with hundreds of young men and women who are enthusiastic readers, and in many cases writers, of verse. He can do a great deal to deepen their interest and knowledge, and if he does his job well the result could be a raising of the whole level of taste in poetry for many years, since these young people include not only the next generation's poets but also many of its publishers, literary journalists, teachers, British Council lecturers, etc. The permanent academic staff of the university can be relied on to lecture interestingly about poetry; but the Professor, being chosen as a practising poet and with that authority behind everything he says, is in a unique position.

SINCE THE WAR, this has been grasped, and we have had an unbroken succession of poets: Day Lewis, Auden, Graves. The election of Blunden does not break that tradition. Nevertheless, it is a step backwards in the evolution of the Chair. The abolition of the statute requiring the holder to be an Oxford M.A. was, in fact, an invitation to the poets of the world to look towards Oxford, to take an interest in what was going on. For the first time, it was possible for any poet who was distinguished enough, and who was capable of talking about poetry as well as writing it (and what true poet isn't?), to be elected. The closed shop had opened at last.

It is true that there were still serious difficulties in the way. The salary offered was very small (it is variously reported as £300 and £350 p.a.), and it was unreasonable to expect a man in mid-career to drop everything and come to Oxford for five years to live on £6 a week. W. H. Auden solved this problem by spending a few weeks in residence each year and giving all his statutory lectures in this period, making himself accessible to undergraduates every day and talking poetry to them by the hour. Mr. Graves followed this tradition, which by now is accepted as the obvious way out of the difficulty. No doubt Mr. Lowell, had he been elected, would have done the same. The main thing to avoid was the impression that the

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Chair, with its low salary and nominally light duties, was a kind of honourable retirement, suitable for a man whose best work was far behind him and whose energies were exhausted.

The barriers, then, were down. A *modus vivendi* had been found; it was not necessary for the Professor to be an old man in need of a pension, nor an M.A. of Oxford. Robert Lowell, a poet not yet fifty and of world stature, was ready to undertake the duties of the Chair. "Henceforth a series of new times began." And then, suddenly, it didn't. What happened? Mr. Blunden is a man worthy of great respect. But he is nearly seventy years old, he has just completed two strenuous decades teaching English literature in the Far East, and even if he can muster the required energy, his best work as a poet was done long ago and there are evidences that his thinking is stuck in the past. (In a press interview during the election, he expressed the wish that all the "strife" might help to "keep poetry alive," as if poetry were a feeble organism that needed frequent transfusions of tomato ketchup. The author of *For the Union Dead* would not have talked in this strain.) To cap it all, the university has had plenty of chance to hear Mr. Blunden's views, since he was a don at Merton from 1931 to 1943, and no one maintains that he has anything to say now that he didn't say then. So again one comes back to the questions: Who did this? How was it done? And for what motives?

THE ANSWER to "Who did it?" is, of course, "Enid Starkie." Dr. Starkie has for twenty years made something of a hobby of electioneering for the Chair of Poetry. As the *Sunday Times* put it, this result was "hailed as another victory for Dr. Enid Starkie, who for the third time has master-minded an election campaign...." And for what motives does this master-mind operate? Dr. Starkie, as those who know her can testify, was originally of the opinion that Robert Lowell should have the Chair; her motive for running Blunden was that somebody else was already running Lowell, so unless she found another candidate there wasn't any fun and excitement to be had. She justified this attitude by remarking ceaselessly to the press and radio that the election was "of no importance," "a game," etc., etc.

Dr. Starkie has a perfect right to do as she pleases; if she feels like making the Professorship her plaything, and openly holds a frivolous attitude towards it, at least she is being honest; and in a university with any regard for poetry this frivolity would be seen for what it is and would attract no support. But it did attract support. The M.A.s voted for Blunden by two to one. So we must take the investigation a stage further. What was *their* motive?

Here, I admit, I begin guessing. The whole attitude is so opaque to me that I find it hard to imagine from the inside. However, it should be possible to guess intelligently. First, Lowell is not known in Oxford, and Oxford people have always preferred the man they know to the man they don't know. Second, Lowell's lack of personal influence means that the people who voted for him did so because they cared for poetry: and how numerous, in Oxford or anywhere else, are the people who care for poetry? Two hundred and forty-one of them came forward, and this in itself is encouraging. But against them, they had the cohorts of those who had known Blunden in his twelve years at Merton; those who wanted to oblige Dr. Starkie; the assorted xenophobes (the aged Wilfred Blunt is on record as saying "We've got to stop this Americanisation," and the outgoing Professor, Mr. Robert Graves, gave his support to xenophobia of the crudest and most ungenerous kind in a letter to *The Times* (February 16) in which he spoke of "the modernist revolution" as being "directed mainly by American expatriates in London and Paris against the English poetic tradition"); in short, the sheer brute weight of the herd-instinct.

One man of my acquaintance, who admitted that he had voted for Mr. Blunden at Dr. Starkie's insistence, though he does not read poetry and takes no interest in it, told me the following anecdote. He met a burly man in an M.A. gown, hurrying towards the Sheldonian Theatre, and asked him if he was going to vote in the election. "Yes." "For whom?" The don paused; bewilderment spread slowly over his honest face; finally, still struggling with incredulity, he brought out, "Blunden, *of course*: he used to belong to my cricket club." Again, two professors from a northern university travelled down to Oxford to vote for Blunden because, forsooth, "he was their External Examiner." No doubt it confers prestige on their university to have the Professor of Poetry as External Examiner: but in whose mind? On what, under these circumstances, is prestige based?

Well, it is all over now. Having poured in from the backwoods and voted to keep Robert Lowell out, the cricketers and clubmen will retire into the bushes until the next election. And the undergraduates, who read poetry because it is poetry and who had no chance to vote, will be left to go to the Professor's lectures, or stay away from them. Setting aside all thoughts of poetry, which in the last resort can take care of itself, one is left with the question: For whom do universities exist?

John Wain

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Academic Fashions & Grandfather-killing

In Defence of Frazer — By I. C. Jarvie

DR. EDMUND LEACH'S article on Frazer and Malinowski [ENCOUNTER, November 1965] is readable, packed with interesting and not easily accessible material on the history of anthropological studies, and I'm sure I'm not alone among ENCOUNTER readers in having learnt a lot from it. However, it is difficult to accept Leach's rich material just as he presents it. In fact there are flagrant contradictions in several of the main points of the article which would have to be smoothed out before it would be possible to tackle his view of Frazer and Malinowski as a possible account of "what actually happened."

Leach's view is that Frazer was "a voracious library mole," "a mere miser of facts" who took what few ideas he had from Tylor and Robertson Smith; Malinowski was a vivid and colourful writer and an inspiring teacher, but "was often careless" and

> neither Frazer nor Malinowski appears particularly laudable. Both men seem to have been more concerned with the plaudits of the gallery than with the pursuit of truth.

Why they received the "plaudits of the gallery" is no doubt a serious sociological problem, but it is not so important as their status as seekers of the truth. This especially with respect to Frazer, who gets grossly mistreated in Leach's article.

Leach and I agree that Malinowski was intellectually important and academically influential. Also, that Frazer was once academically influential and is no longer so among anthropologists. Yet we disagree sharply, it seems, in that I think Frazer was and still is intellectually important, and that he is underrated at present, especially among anthropologists; while Leach thinks he was not intellectually important and his academic influence rightly disappeared after 1910. Clearly we disagree less about the sociological facts of Frazer's reputation than about values—that is, about the true evaluation of Frazer's contribution to anthropological knowledge. And though it seems clear that this is our disagreement, I do not think it is clear to Leach, or that it becomes clear from his article.

Against my view that Malinowski ousted Frazer from the leadership of the anthropological world in a father-killing revolution, Leach holds that Frazer had ceased to be an anthropological leader by 1910 at the latest, and moreover, Malinowski thought the world of Frazer. Thus Malinowski neither needed to overthrow Frazer nor was inclined to do so.

It is true that Malinowski thought the world of Frazer: "In...(1923) he contributed two pieces to *Nature*. The first was a long review of ...*The Golden Bough*. (Dr. Jarvie should study this item; Malinowski's praise of Frazer is exuberant and unqualified.)"

Such praise in no way tells against Malinowski trying to oust Frazer. The point of calling it "father-killing," of course, was that Malinowski's attitude to Frazer was ambivalent: one *loves* one's father. But all this would be unnecessary if Leach could show Frazer was not the leader of the anthropological world and so did not need ousting. In trying to argue this Leach merges the questions of the real or scientific status of a man and that of his academic influence or reputation. Indeed his arguments seem directed at both points at once. Leach discusses Frazer's ideas, but purely in terms of their reception or lack of it by the academic gallery. Perhaps Leach identifies the plaudits of the academics with the truth, but that is not clear. I shudder to think what it could do to some reputations. At any rate, it would make all discussion superfluous which aimed at showing that a man is academically underrated. What *is* clear is that nowhere in Leach's article are there any criticisms of any of Frazer's theories, or of Malinowski's theories, or of any theories whatsoever. All that is to be found is talk about Frazer inspiring awe, evoking no respect, failing to inspire enthusiasm, and becoming a bore. Now Frazer may have been a victim of the passing of *academic fashion*, which is another interesting sociological or, if you like, anthropological problem—not necessarily connected with popular fashion—but I am sure Dr. Leach would agree that Frazer's standing as a research worker, a seeker after truth, should not be mixed up with his academic reputation. Unfortunately, Leach does not carry out such a separation in his article:

> It does not appear that his views were highly *regarded*....

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> Frazer propounded in all three quite different theories of the "origin" of totemism. These he prints side by side in the 1910 volumes, but no fellow anthropologist has ever expressed any marked *enthusiasm* for any of them....
>
> [1900] saw the publication of the second... edition of *The Golden Bough*... the anthropologists were notably *cool*. Andrew Lang was positively *insulting*; Hartland and Haddon praised Frazer's zeal but were *caustic* about his theories. Ten years later Frazer had become a *bore*.... [All my italics.]

Leach is in effect asking us to join him in decrying Frazer as a scholar and seeker after truth because his colleagues did so. But *that* they did so is less important than *why* they did so. Had they any good criticisms of his theories which showed them to be not true? A man who presents three theories side by side deserves critical discussion, not dismissal as a miser of facts, etc.

LEACH FREQUENTLY announces that Frazer's theories were mistaken. Again, so what? A man can be most important in the development of a subject even if all his theories were wrong, provided they stimulated others, or that he opened up new problems which were taken up by others.

Leach's suggestion that the interest of classicists "waned" after *The Golden Bough* seems on the face of it an error. Frazer certainly heavily influenced Jane Harrison and, through her, Gilbert Murray. And certainly the work of Cornford, Burnet, and Finley, not to mention Arnold Toynbee and George Sarton, owes considerable debts to the approach pioneered by Frazer. Their problems, the way they set them, and their general comparative attack on them is all Frazerian. In fact Frazer is so much part of classics now that he is no more mentioned than Boyle is at meetings of the Chemical Society.

There is also, I am afraid, a serious contradiction in Leach's account of Frazer's academic reputation among anthropologists. Leach tells us:

> Frazer's personal influence by that time [the early 20s] was insignificant. His strictly academic reputation had begun to fade before 1900....
>
> Frazer had ceased to matter.... Frazer played no part in university affairs either in Cambridge or elsewhere.... In 1911... the British Association held a major international symposium on "Totemism."... Frazer did not attend; his views were not represented; in the published report his name is never mentioned.

All this "evidence" is very weak, especially when set against the contradictory testimony (1926) of the leading young anthropologist of the time: B. Malinowski. Far from thinking Frazer was no good, of no importance, and a bore, *Malinowski is quoted by Leach as saying about Frazer:*

> No sooner had I begun to read this great work than I became immersed in and enslaved by it... and became bound to the service of Frazerian anthropology.

And later Leach cites Malinowski (1942) as speaking of Frazer's "enormous creative influence" and "power to convert and inspire." How can we reconcile Leach's view that Frazer was without influence after 1910 with Malinowski's words in 1923, 1926, and 1942?

Clearly Leach has several ways of getting out of this glaring inconsistency. Malinowski could be lying. Or, Leach could claim that Malinowski did not speak for the academic anthropologists; or that he was "mistaken and bemused by faith." Perhaps Malinowski was taken in by Lady Frazer's "outstandingly successful public relations operation"?

Whatever we conclude, Leach's account of "what actually happened" in the history of anthropology must be reckoned a non-starter; it is internally inconsistent and Leach's own evidence is inconsistent with it. A minimum requirement of an historical theory is that it is self-consistent and consistent with the known facts.

And this does not by any means exhaust the contradictions and doubtful assertions in Leach's article. Malinowski is said to hold that "you cannot collect facts without a theory" and later is said to stick "firmly to the observable evidence; the myth is a 'charter for social action,' but only if demonstrably so: no guessing." Either Leach or Malinowski (or both) doesn't know that theories are guesses.[1] At another place I am admonished for supposing "(quite erroneously) that Frazer was an unqualified atheist"; yet later Leach says Frazer's "direct references to Christianity are always *carefully* ambiguous." Was the "careful" ambiguity intended perhaps to conceal that Frazer was a theist?

AFTER ALL THIS DISCUSSION of contradictions and errors, I should like to end by saying something about Leach's solution to his main problem. The problem was the popularity of Frazer and Malinowski. It might be explained by publicity, as Leach mentions; or by sex, as Leach also

[1] There are even such theoretical guesses to be found in Leach's article, especially about Lady Frazer who "no doubt" re-issued Frazer's books as part of a campaign to keep in well with the Establishment and who "reputedly" did the skilful scissorswork required on the abridged edition of *The Golden Bough*. How's this for sticking to the facts: no guessing?

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mentions; but his main solution is the universal human appeal of their generalisations about human nature:

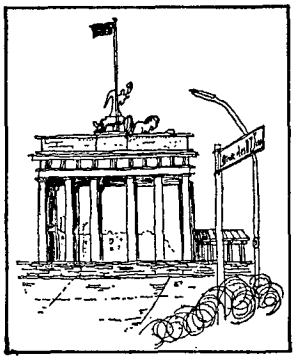
> here, perhaps, we begin to see the roots of their popularity. "Typical Man" may not be a very satisfactory concept from the scientific point of view, but it is surely of interest to all of us.

Now if we look at this we discover an anthropological *conjecture* about what interests "all of us," *i.e.*, "Typical Man"—unfortunately "not a very satisfactory kind of concept from the scientific point of view." In his main solution to his main problem Leach condemns himself out of his own mouth.

Letter from Berlin

An Embattled Playground

The German Literary Scene—By MICHAEL HAMBURGER



NOT many years ago George Steiner could argue that Nazism had so corrupted the German language itself as to make it unfit for the purposes of serious and authentic literature. As late as 1958, too—in the third edition of his book *Die Zerstörung der deutschen Literatur* (*The Destruction of German Literature*)—the distinguished Swiss critic Professor Walter Muschg still maintained that the seeming recovery of German literature was no more than "a new façade adapted to the boom of the reconstruction era." He asserted that "the flood of *ersatz* products" released by a prosperous publishing industry "serves to conceal the lack of a literary public and of significant new works. Instead of a wealth of new and considerable talents there is an unprecedented number of literary prizes and subsidies which are showered down on young writers, so that it has almost become an art to evade this zeal on the part of the cultural powers that be."

It is undeniable that the West German *Wirtschaftswunder* has helped to create a parallel *Kulturwunder*, and that writers have profited materially by the connection between the two—for instance, by the prizes and grants awarded by the cultural committee of the *Bundesverband der deutschen Industrie*, by the patronage extended by the radio stations, and by the general availability of public and private subsidies for the arts. What is immediately striking—if not positively overwhelming—to a foreign observer of the West German literary scene is the extraordinary prestige accorded to the arts and to artists, the amount of publicity given in the national and local press to literary functions such as lectures, readings and discussions, and even to the very organisation and machinery of literature.

A closer look suggests some of the reasons. The prestige of intellectuals has been high in Germany for at least a century, mainly because, as servants or opponents of authority, they were associated with power. The symbolic burning of books under Nazism—and unofficial book-burnings have occurred again recently—was an inverted tribute to the power of writers, the might of the pen. Many of the post-war writers have done their best to dissociate themselves from this tradition and disclaim all connection with power; but, whether they like it or not, the nimbus of power clings to all that they do and say. German literature on both sides, in fact, is more highly politicised than ever before.

This accounts for the constant controversies about the activities of the *Gruppe 47*. Its political opponents are no longer alone in asserting that this predominantly left-wing association of writers has become a kind of literary "establishment," if not a pressure-group that enjoys unfair advantages over writers that have been excluded from it for literary or political reasons. Paradoxically, its members include writers like Günter Eich, whose "Darmstadt Address" (at the presentation to him of the Georg Büchner Prize) is the *locus classicus* of the post-war writers' resistance to power:

> Altogether, we would rather be difficult before we are condemned to silence. It is time for mockery and satire, high time. I for my part suspect that eternal values make power eternal, and our specious delight in things as they are reminds me of the happily obsequious face that I once had to put on. This affirmation of life in controlled language, this perpetual Strength-through-Joy motif and Be Nice to One Another! (But woe betide you if you aren't nice, and woe

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betide you if you don't rejoice!) Everything getting better, everything positive, our economy, our heroes and our love, why be always looking on the gloomy side, happiness and leisure are on the increase, don't worry about yourselves, we do the worrying for you. This pernicious optimism, so suspect because it is willed and made to measure. Eyes and ears tightly shut, and a radiant smile on every face, a song—that is how we march into the thousand and one kinds of slavery, trusting in the future.

Serious attempts are being made to create the perfectly functioning society. We have no time left to say "yes." If our work cannot be understood as criticism, as opposition and resistance, as an awkward question and a challenge to power, then we write in vain, then we are "positive" and decorate the slaughterhouse with geraniums.

THE SPIRIT OF RADICAL OPPOSITION in those words of Günter Eich has animated most of the literature that is generally acknowledged to be representative of the post-war West German scene; and most of the writers who produced that literature are members of the *Gruppe 47*. One is not astonished, therefore, to find an attack on Hans Werner Richter, the founder and organiser of the Group, in the neo-Nazi and neo-militarist *National- und Soldatenzeitung*; nor even to find that the utterances of left-wing writers are censured and debated in the *Bundestag*. What is astonishing is the degree to which this very resistance to power has been organised, and the extreme animosity which the *Gruppe 47* has aroused in writers and intellectuals who are far from being reactionaries or even conservatives. As Professor Ludwig Marcuse (who emigrated to the United States in 1939) has written:

> If I may exaggerate for the sake of brevity, I would say: the German literary machine is the last closed society in our world. If I still had the time I should like to write a book on the history of the domination of literature in Germany, from the classical period to that strange oligarchy of today, in which those in power *inter-communicate without collusion, like communicating pipes*. . . .

Marcuse goes on to speak of a "league of trouble-makers"—meaning the radical, left-wing "establishment." I once referred to the same phenomenon as "a conspiracy of lone wolves." This aspect of the German literary scene is paradoxical and disturbing. Yet it is closely bound up with the recovery of German literature in the last fifteen years.

MARCUSE refers to the literary set-up in West Germany as a closed society; and Muschg claims that there is no public for the work of the prize-winning post-war writers. Yet Marcuse's essay appears in a symposium typically and significantly entitled, *"I Do Not Live in the Bundesrepublik,"* and this symposium—a complement to another called *"I Live in the Bundesrepublik,"* published three years earlier by the same firm—is issued as a cheap paperback, presumably for a mass readership. Muschg's book has appeared in the same paperback series. The present proliferation of books in which writers comment on their own works, their political views or their reasons for living in or outside Germany does point to an obsessional self-consciousness. In periodicals, too, books are not only reviewed, but counter-reviewed and debated, with controversies involving editors or publishers and a general washing of dirty linen in public. All this seems to bear out the suggestion that the West German literary "establishment" is a closed society, preoccupied with its own perpetuation, indifferent to the needs and interests of the general reader.

Once again the appearance is deceptive. The soul-searching of the post-war writers, their questions about their own function and about the state of Germany, their seemingly in-bred discussions and accusations—all these answer a real need and a real interest on the part of a very considerable body of readers, mainly of the younger generation. Hence the pocket-book publication of such symposia—and of Professor Muschg's indictment of a literature fatally impoverished under Nazism. Thanks in part to a tradition of moral authority of which they are highly critical, the post-war writers are widely accepted not only as artists, but as the guides and mentors of their readers. Indeed they are the object of a kind of cult of personality reserved in other countries for politicians, pop entertainers, and the heroes and heroines of sport. No doubt they are also susceptible to corruption and the abuse of their influence; but their function has been vital and indispensable.

This became clear to me during various visits to West Germany. At lectures, public discussions on literary topics, and in university seminars, the prestige and urgency of literature can be experienced at first hand, as an electric response to matters which would be regarded as "academic" or positively boring outside Germany. A public discussion in West Berlin on the "current relevance of Thomas Mann and Rilke" not only filled a large hall, but was interrupted by the attempted gate-crashing of those unable to obtain tickets. True enough, the participants included prominent writers and critics connected with the *Gruppe 47*; but one cannot imagine a comparable audience for comparable personalities in England, not to men-

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tion the evident attentiveness to the matters at issue.

EVEN IN LITERARY DISCUSSIONS of this kind, of course, political and moral tensions are never far from the surface; and it may well be that a certain confusion has arisen between the craving for a new society and the craving for what is new in the arts. Writers of an older generation are apt to be brushed aside with a ruthlessness and impatience that are the obverse of the somewhat indiscriminate enthusiasm for anything *avant-garde*. This tends to widen the dangerous rift between progressive and reactionary opinion in Germany, which still lacks a stable centre of enlightened and liberal conservatism. In this context it is interesting that the prominent *avant-garde* publishing house of Suhrkamp (which recently obtained control of the Insel-Verlag) has announced its intention of devoting the main activities of the subsidiary firm to the rediscovery and consolidation of a tradition—a "tradition of the new," to be sure, compatible with the radicalism of the post-war writers, but a tradition all the same. The slogan chosen by Günter Grass—a writer with a highly developed sense of history, for all his originality—in his recent electioneering campaign on behalf of the Social Democrats was a quotation from Walt Whitman. If the new radicalism is to be more than a youthful *Sturm und Drang* doomed to be succeeded by the usual counter-revolution, impatience with the present is not enough.

IT IS A TOO generalised impatience and discontent that has lent some substance to the charges of irresponsibility often brought against the post-war writers. Günter Eich, himself a most serious and responsible writer, called for "mockery and satire" in his Darmstadt Address. The post-war writers have excelled at mockery and satire—from the brilliant stories in Wolfgang Hildesheimer's *Lieblose Legenden* (1952) to the verse parodies in Peter Rühmkorf's *Kuntstücke* (1962), the witty and incisive political poems in Hans Magnus Enzensberger's *blindenschrift* (1964), and the plays of Martin Walser. Until recently, however, they showed a healthy, but dangerous, reluctance to be unambiguous about their positive beliefs—dangerous, because it was left to the bigoted rear-guard to fill the void with a "passionate intensity." But for the special authority accorded to German writers, there would have been less need for them to profess their commitment with a directness understandably distasteful to them, even though the neo-nationalists and neo-militarists suffer from no inhibitions in this regard. The situation has become more critical in recent years. The documentary plays of Rolf Hochhuth, Peter Weiss and Heinar Kipphardt are as symptomatic of the change as the active participation of Günter Grass and other writers in the recent election.

At the same time the recovery of German literature—and this applies to the best East German writers as much as to those in the West—demanded a complete break with what Eich calls "controlled language," whether of the Nazi or Communist variety. If this freedom were to be sacrificed to non-literary ends, however worthy and important, it would amount to a capitulation of a different kind. Günter Grass is not alone in drawing a very clear line between his social and political commitment on the one hand, his artistic freedom on the other. Erich Fried, a gifted poet who continues to live in England, has found a similar solution. Yet the dilemma is acute. The poet Hans Magnus Enzensberger now devotes most of his time and energy to the editing of an interesting periodical less literary than political and sociological; and his recent poetry renders an extreme conflict between the demands of conscience and the demands of imagination.

IN THE PAST TWO CENTURIES German writers have tended to be either Conformists or Outsiders. If they revolted or protested, they rarely did so on grounds that appealed to more than a minority of kindred spirits. Much post-war protest and revolt was of the same order. Their basis, essentially, was utopian, and they offered no sustenance to the pragmatic majority. In the symposium already mentioned the novelist Heinz von Cramer gives these reasons for preferring to live in Italy:

> We have a brand-new Germany, luxury edition, in which every particle of the human body is provided for—except that they forgot that men have brains.
>
> We have a less showy (and in that, only in that, perhaps more honest) Germany, popular edition. There they are even concerned with the brains of men. But only in order to wash them.
>
> In neither do I wish to live.
>
> In neither is there a place for opposition. Because in the one the opposition strives only for power. Because in the other power permits no contradiction.
>
> In both there is not much worth affirming or preserving. Nor much that is convincing, without recourse to blind faith or blind obedience.
>
> Because in the one democracy is a lie, and freedom an idol.
>
> Because in the other socialism is a lie, and progress a religion.
>
> Because in both a man who thinks independently is considered irresponsible.

[continued on page 60.

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Günter Grass

Kleckerburg

Aimed questions, foresight well aligned
lifelong the backsight will demand:
When I had left the witness box,
stood up in court, against a wall,
where frontiers contravert the rivers,
twelve thousand feet above the stench,
at home, the barber breathed upon
his mirror, and his finger wrote:
Born when? And—out with it—born where?
It lies to the north-east, west of.
And still can feed photographers.
Its name was this and now is that.
There lived until, from then on lived.
I spell: its name was Wrzeszcz before.
The house still stands, but the façade.
The graveyard, which, has ceased to be.
Where fences were now anyone.
Such gothic things does God think up.
For once again at great expense.
I counted gables, none was missing:
The Middle Ages catch us up.
Only that statue with the tail
has ridden off now, has gone west.
And every rest sign also asks;
for when, between small shells, I made sand pies,
when I unearthed a tombstone outside Brenntau,
when I turned over pages in the archives
and in five languages the form in the hotel:
Born when and where, block letters please, born why?
yapped for the answers, my ball pen confessed:
It was when *Rentenmarks* were current.
Here, by the Mottlau, a small tributary,
where Forster roared, Hirsch Fajngold held his tongue,
where I wore out the soles of my first pair
of shoes, and being old enough to speak
learned how to stammer: sand, all clammy
for making pies until my childhood grail
gothically towered and collapsed.
That was some twenty years after Verdun;
came thirty years of respite, till my sons
made me a father; stable smells
talk in this lilt, collector's mania
when stories, butterflies I impaled
and fished for words that cat-like trembled
for flotsam, driftwood washed ashore,
gave birth to twelve, all grey and blind.
Born when? And where? Block letters please. And why?
Those questions I have dragged around,
sunk in the Rhine, buried near Hildesheim;
but divers found them and in dragging nets
flotsam and jetsam rose, was brought to light.
Beechnuts and amber, sherbet fizz,
this pen-knife and this transfer picture,
piece of a piece, ship tonnage figures,
buttons and coins and minute hands,
for every square a bag of wind.

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To confidence tricks I'm driven by
my treasure trove, lost property office:
The smells, the thresholds trodden down,
debts never paid, small batteries
happy in torches, only torches,
and names that are no more than names:
Elfriede Broschke, Siemoneit,
Guschnerus, Lusch and Heinz Stanowski;
and Chodowiecki, Schopenhauer
were born there too. Born when? Born why?
Yes, I was always good at history.
Ask me about the plagues and price increases.
Peace treaties fluently I can pray,
masters of orders, Swedish war,
and all the Jagellons I know,
and all the churches, from St. John's
to Holy Trinity, red brick.
Who still asks where. My intonation
is Baltic, wily, warm as rooms.
What says the Baltic? Blubb, pfff, pshsh . . .
In German, Polish: Blubb, pfff, pshsh . . .
But when I asked the functionaries
at the assembly-weary, coach-
and-special-train-fed gathering
of eastern refugees at Hanover,
they had forgotten what the Baltic says
and made the Atlantic Ocean roar;
I kept insisting: Blubb, pfff, pshsh . . .
So: Bash him! Kill him! all yelled out,
he's turned his back on human rights,
on pensions, on his native city,
on compensations, restitutions,
just listen to his intonation:
That's not the Baltic, that's high treason.
Put screws on him and make him talk,
get wheels and tongs and pokers, blind him,
and stretch his conscience on the rack.
We want his answer: when and where.
Not on the Straw Dyke, not in Merchants' Meadows,
nor yet in Pepper City—would that I had
been born between great store lofts on the Holm!
Near the small Striessbach, close to the Butts
it happened, and today the street
in Polish is called Lelewela—only
the number left of the door remains, remains.
And sand, for pies, all clammy, muddy: grail . . .
At Kleckerburg was born, west of.
It lies northwesterly, south of.
The light there changes much more than.
The seagulls are not seagulls, but.
And there the Milch, a Vistula tributary,
with honey, blessed with many a bridge, flowed by.
Baptised and vaccinated, schooled, confirmed.
Bomb splinters, shrapnel were my toys.
And I grew up, was reared between
the Holy Ghost and photographs of Hitler.
Ships' sirens echo in my ears,
lopped sentences and wind-blown cries,
a few sound church bells, rifle fire
and bits of Baltic: Blubb, pfff, pshsh . . .

Translated by Michael Hamburger

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> The word intellectual is a dirty word again.
> On both sides.
> And they are hunting intellectuals again.

Sincere though it is, this statement does nothing to bridge the old gulf between German writers and society. For one thing, it speaks only for the intellectuals; for another, it is too indiscriminately disgruntled to be of any use to those who are trying to establish the freedoms in which Heinz von Cramer believes—and there are such people, on both sides. As for the opponents of those freedoms, it furnishes them with the arguments that the radical intellectuals have washed their hands of public issues, that they represent no interests but their own, and that their grumbling is nothing more than self-indulgence. The cruder reactionaries will be able to add their favourite charge against the unpatriotic intellectuals who "foul their own nest." The statement, in short, is in line with the notorious incapacity of German intellectuals to engage with the realities of politics.

The active campaigning of Günter Grass, like his excursions into political journalism, is a valiant attempt to reverse this trend, to put his great prestige as a writer into the service of something other than the "closed society" of German literature. Many other West German writers, too, have broken out of the vicious circle of conformism on the one hand, total opting out on the other. That is one reason why German literature has ceased to be parochial. The crisis that threatened to destroy German literature called for desperate remedies, both artistic and moral. Things that could be taken for granted elsewhere had to be called in question, probed and searched. This, in a number of writers, has led to a heightening of consciousness and an awareness of issues that concern readers throughout the world. A poet like Enzensberger, in fact, takes great trouble to keep abreast of international developments—and not only in the arts, but in science, technology, economics, linguistics. The outlook of many British and American writers seems very narrow and smug in comparison.

THE RECOVERY of German literature will hardly be disputed by those who have kept up with its productions. What also needs saying at this point is that no work of literature that matters can be explained or understood alone. of its cultural and social background alone. Because works of art are neither preconditioned nor predictable, even the physical division of Germany, for all its ideological implications, has not prevented the two literatures from interpenetrating. Several East German writers are widely read and admired in West Germany. One of them, the poet Johannes Bobrowski (he died last year at the age of forty-eight) had received the most highly respected literary prize to be won in West Germany, that awarded by the *Gruppe 47*—not by an institution or official body, that is, but by writers and critics. Nor—despite the two symposia I have mentioned—has a writer's place of residence proved at all decisive.

If the most widely discussed writers seem to constitute a single group, it is not because they write in the same manner, but because a certain solidarity seems necessary to them in the light of past experiences. As far as literary practice is concerned, the *Gruppe 47* itself could hardly be more heterogeneous. Its members include pure poets like Paul Celan, very few of whose poems reveal any kind of political commitment, writers of experimental prose and verse, but also writers of "straight" novels and stories, playwrights, essayists and critics. Several of its distinguished members rarely attend its annual meetings, at which new and established writers submit their work for judgment. It is mainly the presence of publishers and editors at these meetings that has given the Group the reputation of having "the power to make or break" a writer's career. If the Group does hold a kind of monopoly associated in other countries with the mass media, the fault cannot lie with the writers only; clearly there must be a vacuum in the structure of West German society and its institutions. I have already suggested that this vacuum has to do with the younger generation's impatience with the old order. Whatever the temptations not so much for the imaginative writers themselves as for the organisers and middle-men, it might well be calamitous for Germany if the vacuum were to be filled by men less critical of power itself and of the ends to which power is usually applied.

THE PRESENT LITERARY SCENE in West Germany is an embattled playground—a playground, because after Nazism German writers rediscovered the imaginative freedom of *homo ludens*, the element of sheer play contained in all true art, however serious and dedicated; but also because the exercise of this freedom has been rewarded and applauded to a degree almost unprecedented in Germany or elsewhere —evidently as a release from constrictions and restrictions suffered by many besides the writers themselves. At the same time the tensions and dangers of the post-war world are acutely felt in a country whose former capital is like a microcosm of that divided world; and it is no accident that Berlin has become the centre of the new literary revival. The playground is embattled, too, because the writers are fighting on

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more than one front; not only against the "controlled language" on the other side of the Wall, but against those on their own side who would like them to be silenced or just as strictly controlled, who do not want to be reminded of Auschwitz and Belsen, but like to think of themselves as the innocent victims of an unjust war (even asserting, as the *National-Zeitung* did recently in cold print, that worse atrocities were committed in American P.O.W. camps than in German concentration camps). No wonder, therefore, that the playground is highly politicised, and that many writers feel called upon to act as the conscience of their country. They have every reason to fear that too few of the professional politicians and educators are prepared to take over this function. If, as they feel, their struggle for survival is also a struggle for the survival of essential freedoms and standards, they cannot afford to be too squeamish in their use of the publicity machine; given the same opportunities, their opponents would have no scruples at all.

Needless to say, their influence is neither as wide nor as deep as it may seem. One has only to spend a few days in West Germany—not in a tourist hotel, of course, but in small guest houses or private lodgings—to discover that the great majority of lower middle-class and working-class people have hardly been affected by the new literature or by the kind of questions discussed in progressive periodicals. That is what one would expect in most countries; but the special prestige of the intelligentsia in Germany and the profound shaking-up which the whole of Germany experienced in 1945, if not earlier, might well have produced exceptional changes. Yet the *décor* of inns and private houses alone reveals a widespread hankering after the past; not after the Nazi past necessarily, but after the sentimentalised glories and cosiness which the Nazis knew how to include in their appeal. The literature in key with that hankering is submerged at present, but the politics in key with it have prevailed. In Britain, at any rate, one is far less aware than in Germany of a sharp incongruity between cultural institutions and the opinions, tastes, and way of life of the majority. The incongruity is all the sharper because German book design, for instance, is among the best and most modern anywhere, because there are so many new buildings in West Germany and "new styles of architecture" lead one to expect "a change of heart."

IF THERE IS ANY TRUTH in the accusation that the German "literary machine" is a closed society, the causes lie deeper than analogies with industrial networks imply. German literature of a certain kind may be more efficiently organised and more widely publicised than its nearest counterparts in other countries—for reasons that are mainly political; and it is certainly true that criticism, on the whole, is less rigorous, more inclined to irresponsible eulogies. What is far more significant, though, is the degree of alienation apparent not only in statements like that by Heinz von Cramer but in many imaginative works; an alienation, that is, between writers and the majority of their compatriots. In a work like Gisela Elsner's *The Giant Dwarfs* the German bourgeoisie is subjected to a kind of scrutiny quite different from social criticism or satire, as practised by novelists everywhere; it is seen as something utterly monstrous and sub-human. Beneath the hard surface of Gisela Elsner's book there must be a hidden core of involvement in the human condition, but all the writer's skill has been devoted to the task of keeping it invisible. The political and commercial abuse of appeals to sentiment have made them suspect to most of the best contemporary writers in West and East Germany, and there is a widespread preference for a certain coolness and dryness of manner. Yet, despite much accurate observation, *The Giant Dwarfs* ends up by telling us more about the kind of alienation to which German writers are prone than about the state of West German society. It is as though the searching beam directed on the objects in that book had become so bright as to be reflected back from them on to the "impersonal" viewer. Where this happens, protest and revolt become attitudes rather than functions, and literature really seems to exist not only in a closed society, but in an air-conditioned private hell. Many detractors of the *avant-garde* find it convenient to confuse such attitudes with the genuine commitment of other writers.

Purely literary judgments, in any case, are almost as rare in West Germany as they are in East Germany. Criticism, too, is embattled, and is likely to remain so until political and social tensions become less extreme. Two surveys of contemporary German literature by the critic Marcel Reich-Ranicki show to what extent criticism, too, has been politicised. Reich-Ranicki, it is true, writes for the weekly Hamburg paper *Die Zeit,* whose literary pages are exceptionally close to the pulse of the time. Yet his two books, *Deutsche Literatur in West und Ost* and *Literarisches Leben in Deutschland,* are typical in their stress on polemical issues, on the political records of imaginative writers, and on literary scandals. Public institutions in Germany —and literature still tends to be treated as a public institution—lack the safety valves built into similar institutions elsewhere; so explosions are among the regular occurrences. This means

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that violent conflicts are aired and fought out, instead of being hushed up, but also that reputations are damaged unnecessarily.

If German literature has made a remarkable recovery, German society still needs time for consolidation—by which I do not mean the solidity of petrifaction, but quite the opposite. The revolutionary shake-up of 1945 has not yet penetrated far or deep enough.

TO UNDERSTAND the full import of Günter Grass' recent electioneering campaign on behalf of the Social Democrats—during which he made two hundred and fifty speeches all over West Germany—one has to see it in relation not only to the attitudes of other contemporary German writers, but also to historical trends and developments going back a century at the very least.[1] Günter Grass is by no means alone in caring passionately about society and politics. Indeed there are other writers—not excluding poets—who seem more committed than he is to a literature of protest and conscience-rousing. Günter Grass' answer to these—in the Darmstadt Speech delivered just after the Election, on receiving the Büchner Prize[2]—is that their professed radicalism remains "utopian," because no society or party will ever be good enough for them, and they will continue to wash their hands of the "dirty business of politics," as generations of German writers have done before them. The significance and uniqueness of Günter Grass' act lie less in the nature of his own policies and allegiances than in his readiness to break with a long tradition of superior non-involvement—"power-protected inwardness," as Thomas Mann called it—and to enter whole-heartedly into a campaign so strenuous as to have worn out any writer lacking his prodigious energy and stamina. It may well be that no other writer could have taken on that practical assignment; but Günter Grass' quarrel with writers and intellectuals of what has been called "the radical establishment" is that so many of them did not even declare their support or bother to do what they could—too haughty, he suggests, to engage in a struggle between the "bad" and the "worse."

If these claims for the importance of Günter Grass' intervention sound extravagant, they can easily be substantiated by comparing the Büchner Prize Address with those of earlier recipients of the same prize. Paul Celan's address, *Der Meridian*, is a delicate and laconic essay in autobiography, a worthy complement to his admirable poetry. Günter Eich's is a profession of faith in the freedom of writers to protest and debunk false values—as Georg Büchner did in his time, with exemplary courage—and an eloquent defence of literature as a "criticism of life":

> No, I am not out for answers; they arouse my mistrust. I opt for the question, for criticism, for the critical poet Georg Büchner, for a type of writer who poses questions and calls things in question. How did Büchner's friend put it? "Critique of everything that claimed, or succeeded in establishing, an absolute authority." What is in question is the critique of power, the refusal to say yes to its claims.
>
> My attitude to power, I admit, is rather unreasonable. If power is the indissoluble substance of our world, I am somewhat comforted by the discovery of an anti-substance. When I hear that power has its antecedents even in the animal kingdom, that it is "a universal phenomenon of social order at every stage of its development and in every sphere of human community and social organisation," I reply as follows to people's resentment of my anarchistic instinct: isn't that to make every exertion of power seem harmless and beyond suspicion? By declaring power to be a universal principle it has been invested with a dubious sort of legitimacy.
>
> And although power was established even before the Fall of Man, I obstinately insist that it is an evil institution. The remark that it will never cease to be active in our world must have been made during a conversation at the hairdresser's. . . .

As an imaginative writer Günter Grass is certainly not deficient in the "anarchistic instincts" to which this statement appeals, and he has made good use of the freedom to protest and debunk. Yet he has learnt that so sweeping a condemnation of all power makes no one feel uncomfortable, least of all the opponents of those freedoms which he agrees with Günter Eich in upholding. Except in imaginative literature, Günter Eich's "anti-substance" is likely to remain a kind of phlogiston; and it has also served to keep the honourable and understandable radicalism of West German intellectuals politically ineffectual.

GÜNTER GRASS has realised that the enviable prestige and influence accorded to writers and intellectuals in West Germany has tended to make them a "closed society" and to put them out of touch with the country as a whole. He has also learnt to make a necessary distinction between the kind of absolute commitment de-

[1] Historical surveys of the unhappy relationship between German writers and politics are attempted in two recent books—Ronald Gray: *The German Tradition in Literature, 1871–1945* (Cambridge University Press, 1965) and my own *From Prophecy to Exorcism* (Longmans).

[2] Günter Grass: *Rede über das Selbstverständliche* (Luchterhand, Berlin).

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manded by literature—a commitment that is inevitably subjective and very often essentially utopian—and the kind of relative commitment demanded by a given political situation. That distinction seems obvious enough in Britain, with its long tradition of empiricism and democracy; and Günter Grass himself has claimed that his choice was the obvious, self-evident choice—hence the title of his speech. Yet the whole history of German idealism, with its inclination towards a self-defeating and immobilising dualism, must have prompted him to leave party politics to the professionals. Günter Grass pays tribute to Thomas Mann; but even Thomas Mann never overcame that dualism, going so far as to set up an antinomy between *"Geist"* and democracy. Nothing could be more welcome to those who make power their business in Germany than a perpetuation of that sort of thinking. The intellectuals, then, could keep their circuses, however anarchic, leaving others to control the distribution of bread—the very state of affairs which Georg Büchner attacked and satirised in the 1830s. *"Geist"* would remain a distraction from unpleasant realities and an excuse for abject conformism.

THESE are a few pointers to the implications of Günter Grass' decision to canvass for the Social Democrats. His Darmstadt speech, in his own words, is the "balance-sheet" of his campaign, but also a revelation of "our national bankruptcy—the forged bank-notes of our literature—a vast *hubris* that feels personally justified and secure—and the phrase-making conscience of a nation that does not exist...." The extracts that follow can be left to speak for themselves:

> The decision against Willy Brandt, that is, against Willy Brandt as a former *émigré* and thus against all those who left Germany under Nazism is the equivalent of a "yes" to opportunism, of a "yes" to an unthinking materialism, of support for a Ludwig Erhard: under the aegis of parties that call themselves Christian the dance round the Golden Calf is to be allowed to continue for another four years.
>
> The manipulators of this questionable victory availed themselves of every means at their disposal, even slander. What they wanted was to simplify the differences between two truly different German politicians until the electors were confronted with a compelling picture in black and white, so that the choice was an easy one. Once again the word *émigré*, pronounced in German, proved an effectively dirty word... for an unwritten law in Germany declares: *Émigrés* are not to return home. Let them find a grave in Paris or Zurich, like Heinrich Heine or Georg Büchner. At the same time the commentator on the Nüremberg racial laws, Hans Globke, was considered a suitable Secretary of State in the *Bundesrepublik* for more than a decade and so for the growing generation also. The parties that call themselves Christian gave a free hand to the so-called political genius Konrad Adenauer; the crime of Auschwitz was carried forward into our own time, invested with dignity and office. Only this explains why the indestructible and self-propagating family of fellow-travellers, accomplices, accessories and understrappers allowed themselves to feel hatred when an *émigré* declared his readiness to stand for the office of Chancellor in this country.
>
> We all know, the spreading of slanders becomes like an epidemic. Who would attempt at this stage to discover the source of those ingenious rumours which, twenty years after the end of the last epidemic, are poisoning our people once more, even in the classrooms? Herr Kapfinger and Herr Strauss, Herr Adenauer and Herr Erhard will clear one another in the usual impervious way of this crime against our democracy; but what true Christian had the effrontery to give his vote to the slanderers in the name of the Crucified? True enough, the Social Democrats also obtained victories that should make us feel indulgent; but I have no wish to forget or leave well alone. Anyone who has toured two hundred and fifty German towns and tried—often in vain—to eradicate the ever self-renewing growth of hatred, at Bocholt and Regensburg, at Mühldorf-on-the-Inn and at Cloppenburg, who saw milk-faced schoolboys ready to condemn a German statesman who at nineteen had understood the guises and disguises adopted by the enemies of Germany, drawing the right conclusions—anyone who has seen the exposition of an incipient national tragedy less new than it seems, with all its cheap theatrical bombast, has no wish and no right to keep silence....
>
> And who heard theologians call the slanderers by name from the pulpit? What Faustian striving restrained our professors from defending the German *émigrés*, represented by the candidate Willy Brandt, with courageous and manly words? What dreadful things have to happen in this country before a learned man will turn from his papers for a few hours and take his stand here, now and at this moment?...
>
> I take my stand. And I laud and praise that oppressed and hard-working functionary of the SPD in the Bocholt constituency who resists its seventy per cent of ignorance, with little success; and I accuse the arrogance of all those professors and students to whom politics are mere party bickering, to whom reality is repulsive and only utopias are sweet....
>
> So they hammer out their reckless phrases and in their sheltered reserves, according to demand, sing of intellectual freedom, the independence of the intellectuals, and their difficulties in writing the truth. God-like, rope-walking and dancing above the exhaust fumes of our society, they set out their seminar Marxism like fleecy clouds, worry about Indo-China and Persia, that is, about remote miseries which, thanks to their high vantage point, they can survey without an effort.

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Their pens would sooner bring off a long heroic epic hymning Fidel Castro and the sugar-cane isle than a simple appeal in favour of Willy Brandt that would take the wind out of the sails of liars in their own country. And who would expect this decorative cosmopolitan *élite* to get involved with our petit-bourgeois Social Democrats and their strenuous endeavours at reform? . . .

Look at the conscience of our nation! It admitted no compromises and would have no truck with mediocrity. Despite every sort of temptation it never descended to the people, but always kept nice and clean, preferring its own sort—and praising peace, condemning the atom bomb. And it abominated capitalism on the one hand, the dictatorship of the proletariat on the other. But for the Social Democrats, with their worn edges and their impetus doomed to limp, we could not induce this *élite* to utter a friendly Yes.

Did our knights of the book review pages not notice that they, too, have been handed the bill? —For this defeat cannot be put down to the account of the Social Democrats, or dumped on their long overburdened backs. Whoever felt committed to the freedoms of creativity and yet thought that he must not commit himself to a party—he, too, has been voted out and is now without a mandate. . . .

It must be very hard to do the self-evident thing. Truly, in this country the celebrated desert beast will sooner pass through the eye of a needle than a man of learning leave his intellectual heights and pay his respects to stinking reality.

An election has taken place in our country. In the chorus of speakers I missed certain voices. What became of those to whom, a few years ago, their permanent political *engagement* lent a little Third Programme eloquence? Where, Alfred Andersch, did your ready indignation sour the milk of the reactionaries? Where, Heinrich Böll, did your high moral claims make bigoted Christians turn pale?

Oh, beautiful fiction of the free (read: outlawed), of the independent (read: dependent on his independence) writer or poet! . . .

Oh, you narrow-chested radicals who find the pace of reforms too slow and too hesitant. You advocate revolutions that occurred and killed themselves long ago, while the much-ridiculed reformists, if they were lucky enough to survive the revolutions on the Left and on the Right, continue undaunted to adapt their programme to the changing times, making a small improvement here, trembling there, but standing up for the right thing all the same, that is to say, moving on very slowly, obstructed by compromises, under the name of Social Democracy. . . .

IN THE CRUCIAL MATTER of re-unification, Günter Grass is in favour of compromise also, and of sacrifices on the part of West Germany. He believes that the Social Democrats would have achieved an eventual union of the two Germanys by peaceful means and within the existing frontiers. The speech concludes with a warning about renascent nationalism and bigotry, which would give neighbouring nations reason to fear Germany once again; and with thanks to those writers (and the composer Hans Werner Henze) who responded to Grass' request for help in doing "the obvious thing."

GÜNTER GRASS' *Rede über das Selbstverständliche* was delivered at the presentation to him of a literary prize by a strictly non-political institution, the *Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung* at Darmstadt. With all allowances made for the precedent of Georg Büchner's involvement in politics, non-German readers may still wonder how Grass' "balance-sheet" could be presented to that body, on that occasion. Few West German readers will be astonished by that seeming anomaly or impropriety—except on grounds no less political than the speech. That writers and intellectuals are, or ought to be, "the conscience of the nation" is an assumption rarely questioned in Germany; hence the honours and publicity bestowed on them, but also the burning of books, the debates in the *Bundestag* on statements made by writers, and the invective of outraged politicians. In both Germanies literature is treated as a public institution, a matter of public concern. The demarcation lines between *"Kultur"* and politics have not yet been firmly drawn, even in the pluralistic West. Günter Grass' speech contains many indications that he is not happy about this state of affairs. The election campaign itself can be seen as an attempt to remedy it. Yet, given the state of affairs, he could not disclaim his prerogatives without disclaiming his responsibilities.

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Modernisms Again

Objects, Jokes and Art — By FRANK KERMODE

DO WE HAVE a "rage for order"? It has long been thought so, and the arts have long been thought ways of appeasing it. But there is a difference between "order" and "an order"; and what looked like the first can become simply the second: the conventional literary epic, or pastoral poetry, or the heroic couplet, or history-painting, or sonata form. In the older modernism, order grew mysterious. Following the organicist view of the Romantics, and the sophisticated gloss put on it by the Symbolists, poets treated it as the property of works purged of personality and emotion, new shapes out there and independent, perceptible by an *élite* which had transcended bourgeois literacy and could operate a logic of imagination divinely void of intellect. Thus the highly original forms of Mallarmé and, later, Eliot have only a tenuous relation to more vulgar notions of form; and in the novel, for instance, the kind of extreme deviation from prevailing norms which had formerly occurred only now and again became a regular feature. The great experimental novels of early modernism—Kafka, Proust, Joyce, Musil, for instance—are all characterised by a kind of formal desperation.

Yet such forms continue to assume that there was an inescapable relationship between art and order. Admittedly when the forms of the past grew "rigid and a bit absurd" you undertook a new research and produced modern forms. They might indeed be extremely researched, as Wallace Stevens suggests when he says we can't have the old "romantic tenements" and that what will now suffice may be much less palpable: merely, perhaps

a woman dancing, a woman
Combing. The poem of the act of the mind—

but the act of the mind is still a form-creating act, and the form it creates provides satisfactions of the rage for order that cannot be had in life not so organised, so that art is different from life at least in this respect. And this view of the matter is still in many ways standard. Its various implications — "autonomy," anti-didacticism, everything that attracts, both for the arts and the criticism that attends them, the epithet "formalist"—are, whether we like it or not, still in the minds of most of us when we consider a work of art. The first thing we think about is that this is a poem or a painting, and if it were not we should find another way of speaking than the one we choose. *"Art is not life and cannot be/A midwife to society,"* as Mr. Auden pedagogically explained. It may be somewhat illiberal, even untruthful, and reactionary by its very nature, as Mr. Trilling thinks; he is supported in his opinion by the theorist of the formal *nouveau roman*,[1] and also, as we will see, by the Apollinaire of the New York renaissance, Harold Rosenberg.

THE FACT THAT WE HAVE inherited the set of aesthetic assumptions I have very roughly

[1] Robbe-Grillet's collection of essays, *Pour un nouveau roman*, published in 1963, has now been translated, together with the short pieces called *Instantanes* of the same year, by Barbara Wright (*Snapshots & Towards a New Novel*, Calder, 30s.).

Robbe-Grillet comes out strongly for the view that art is gratuitous, and from the revolutionary point of view "useless, if not frankly reactionary"; the fact that it will be on the good side at the barricades must not be allowed to interfere with our freedom to pursue "art for art's sake." This book, obviously one of the really important contributions to the theory of the novel, deserves much more discussion than it has yet had in England or the U.S., and the translation is welcome. Incidentally, there is some justice in his claim that it is other people who have *theories* of the novel; his is an anti-theory, so to speak, and for all his "formalism" that is modern enough.

I should also mention here Anthony Cronin's *A Question of Modernity* (Secker & Warburg, 30s.) which is somewhat commonplace in the title essay, and often simply bad-tempered, but as to the matter of art and life there are some fine things, including a brilliant long essay on *Ulysses* and one about the novel which is full of original ideas.

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sketched above makes it all the more difficult for most of us to understand the new men, who claim to be destroying the barrier between life and art, asserting their indifference to the question "Is this a picture?" and professing contempt for ideas of order, especially when they can be associated with the art of the past. Nevertheless we shall certainly understand the older modernism better if we come to terms with the newer.

There seems to be much agreement that the new rejection of order and the past is not quite the same thing as older rejections of one's elders and their assumptions. It is also agreed that this neo-modernist anti-traditionalism and anti-formalism, though anticipated by Apollinaire, begins with Dada. Whether for the reason that its programme was literally impossible, or because their nihilism lacked ruthlessness, it is undoubtedly true, as Harold Rosenberg has observed, that Dada had many of the characteristics of a new art movement, and that its devotees treated it as such, so in some measure defeating its theoretical anti-art programme. Raoul Haussmann only recently attacked the "Neo-Dadaists" because what they were doing was ignorantly imitative, but also because it wasn't "art." If what we want is to understand anti-art I suppose our best plan is to follow the signs back to Duchamp, whose importance in this context is that he expressly and intelligently sought ways of "no longer thinking the thing in question is a picture."

The point is simply this: whereas such a poem as *The Waste Land* draws upon a tradition which imposes the necessity of form, though it may have none that can be apprehended without a disciplined act of faith, a new modernism prefers and professes to do without the tradition and the illusion. At this point there begin to proliferate those manifold theoretical difficulties associated with neo-modernist art. They are usually discussed in terms of the visual arts and music, probably because they are palpably even greater in the case of literature. Duchamp could pick something up and sign it, as he did with his "ready-mades," and this raises problems, but at least it does not move from "the plane of the feasible."[2] In poetry one can of course use chunks of economic history and the collage of allusion, but usually for some formal irony, or to get a special effect by juxtaposition; simply to sign a passage ready-made by somebody else is not to change it but to plagiarise it. It would not matter if the borrowed passage were in most ways as commonplace as a mass-produced artefact; it would only be a more obvious case of plagiarism. A legal argument about a Duchamp ready-made might be interesting, but one would not expect a plausible defence in a case on literary ready-mades. The closest poetry can get is to cultivate impersonality and objectivity—Williams' wheel-barrow and Robbe-Grillet's out-there coffee-pot. The things made are not wheel-barrows and coffee-pots; but similar theoretical assumptions are involved.

Duchamp used to speak of "Dada blankness"—a way of making or naming things which has no relation to humanity or nature, no "responsibility"; "alien objects of the outer world," as Lawrence D. Steefel puts it, "are reduced to instruments of the artist's transcendence of them."[3] Blankness and indifference, like the "impersonality" of Eliot, become, from one angle, a kind of egoism, indeed dehumanisation has always been, from this angle, the apotheosis of the *culte du moi*. Dada, at its most apocalyptic, had it both ways, and proclaimed that after the present phase of quasi-Oriental "indifference" there was to follow an era of purged personality, "the cleanliness of the individual" (according to Tzara). The extreme and, on the face of it, paradoxical individualism of, say, Eliot, Lewis, and Pound, is the parallel case.

THERE IS, in short, a family resemblance between the modernisms. "Indifference" and the abrogation of "responsibility" are the wilder cousins of the more literary "impersonality" and "objectivity." The palaeo-modernist conspiracy which made a cult of occult forms is not unrelated to the extremist denial that there are any. These are the self-reconciling opposites of modernism.

Duchamp, like some of the older poets, is a man whose intelligence has been dedicated to anti-intellectualist ends. The paradoxical pursuit of randomness in the arts—a consequence of doctrinaire anti-formalism—is now carried on with every resource of ingenuity by very intelligent men. To early modernists the subjection of personality and the attack on false orders were one and the same process; the logicians of neo-modernism have not only accepted the position but developed it into an attack on order, perhaps not successfully, but with energy. Viewed in this light, the new theory bristles with paradoxes as, for instance, in Rauschenberg's remark: "I consider myself successful

[2] The phrase is Beckett's. His "Three Dialogues with George Duthuit" (on Tal Coat, Masson, and Bram von Velde) have just been published, together with the early Proust essay, by John Calder (18s.). They are excellent examples of Beckett's philosophico-farcical manner in the discussion of the arts.

[3] "The Art of Marcel Duchamp," *Art Journal*, XXII (Winter 1962–63).

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only when I do something that resembles the lack of order I sense."

The theoretical situation is in detail puzzling, but it must be admitted that in its practical and personal manifestations it is often pleasing, and indeed funny. For this reason Calvin Tomkins' book, which is not only a set of "profiles" but an intelligent presentation of ideas, is as amusing as it is informative.[4] His four subjects are Duchamp, Cage, Tinguely, and Rauschenberg. They are all, as he says, very different—Duchamp more detached, Tinguely more destructive, Cage more programmatic, and Rauschenberg more anti-art than the others—but they have many interests in common. For instance, all of them say that *art is much less interesting than life,* and not generically different from it. *All* seek impersonality (though strong personalities are vividly present in their work) and therefore *experiment with chance. All accept that art is characteristically impermanent,* being made up of things without transcendence. And *all* rejoice to *work on the borders of farce.* They make random and unpredictable things in a world consisting of random and unpredictable things, an activity that is anyway absurd; the purposeless is pursued with fanatic purpose, and this is farcical in itself. One difference between a Tinguely machine and a Heath Robinson is that Tinguely takes it past the drawing-board stage, but another is that Robinson aimed to amuse, whereas Tinguely, though he doesn't mind amusing, has no affective purpose at all; and there is a somewhat similar distinction to be drawn between a Hoffnung concert and a Cage recital.

These propositions and attitudes are characteristic of neo-modernism, and the literary man should learn what he can from them. The view that art is not distinct from life, to which (in Cage's words) it is "inferior in complexity and unpredictability," is of course "anti-formalist." In the past we have simply been wrong in supposing that order is a differentia of art; hence the new doctrine, propounded by Cage and given an elaborate philosophical defence in Morse Peckham's recent book, *Man's Rage for Chaos,* that "a work of art is what the perceiver observes in what has been culturally established as a perceiver's space. This can be anything...." In Cage's *4′ 33″* the pianist sits before a closed piano for four minutes and thirty-three seconds, and the only sound is what floats in randomly from outside—bird songs, buses—or what the spectators make themselves. So long as there is a concert-situation there is a concert, although the content of the concert is random and mini-

[4] *The Bride and the Bachelors.* Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 36s.

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mal. This is a logical step forward from Satie's musical collage, and is perhaps more like Kurt Schwitters simply planting bits of things before the observer in a "perceiver's space." It pushes the protest against "retinal" art, and its musical equivalent, to the point where it is a protest against the seriousness of palaeo-modernist protest, and where the difference between art and joke is as obscure as that between art and non-art. A point to remember, though, is that the development can be seen as following from palaeo-modernist premises without any violent revolutionary stage.

I MYSELF BELIEVE that there is a difference between art and joke, while admitting that it has sometimes been a difficult one to establish; and I would want to call *4′ 33″* and Tinguely's famous self-destroying machine ("Homage to New York") jokes, if only because however satisfying they may be, they do not seem sufficient in respect of the needs which what is called art has usually sufficed. But this is to use very inadequate criteria; and having supposed vaguely that neo-modernism was heavily dependent on the extension of modernist *theory*, I was glad to find a philosopher, Arthur Danto,[5] saying this very thing in a sharper way. Danto says the difficulties begin when one forsakes the old mimetic assumptions and says, for example, that a painting of a table is as real as a table. If this seems hard to take when the painting is Post-Impressionist, it becomes easier when the objects painted are strictly inimitable—the numeral 3, for example. Any copy of that simply *is* the numeral 3. What kind of mistake would you be making if you tried to sleep in Rauschenberg's famous *Bed*, which is a bed? You cannot mistake reality for reality. Danto suggests that we use *is* in two distinct senses. We say a spot of white paint "is" Icarus, and also that "this is a bed." These two usages are presumably both present when we say that *Bed* is a bed; but if it has paint on it and is in a "perceiver's space" then the Icarus *is* is dominant.

Actually for Danto the physical location is less important than a sort of intellectual or theoretical space—call it the atmosphere of intellectual assumptions breathed alike by the artist and the game spectator.

> To see something as art requires something the eye cannot descry—an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of art: an artworld.

But it all comes to the same thing. If Brillo made their boxes out of plywood they would still not be Warhols, and if Andy Warhol made his out of cardboard they would not be Brillo boxes. Provided the "space" and the aesthetic convention were right he could simply sign a real Brillo box ready-made. We know what it is by where it is, and by our being induced to make the necessary theoretical dispositions (or not, as the case may be). As Jasper Johns puts it, "What makes an object into art is its introduction into the art context." Examination question: what is a signed Warhol Brillo box, found among a stack of Brillo boxes in a supermarket? Assuming, of course, that the customer knows the name, and what Mr. Warhol does for a living. Another related question is, "What makes an object into a joke?"

THE THEORY so far is, then, that art is whatever you provide when the place in which you provide it is associated with the idea, and contains people who are prepared to accept this and perhaps other assumptions. Mr. Peckham would argue that our failure to have noticed this earlier resulted from persistent brain-washing of the kind that stuck us with the notion that we have a "rage for order"—that we seek the consolations of form amid natural chaos inhospitable to humans. This on his view is entirely false. We have, on the contrary, a natural rage for *chaos*, and that is why, truth prevailing, the concept of form is dead. With it, of course, dies the notion that the artist has to do with establishing and controlling a formal order in his work (what Keats in ignorance called "information") and, also, the notion that this order has a high degree of permanence. Of course these notions have at one time or another been challenged before, though perhaps not in their totality. Artists have always known that there was an element of luck in good work ("grace," if you like) and that they rarely knew what they meant till they'd seen what they said; and there are milder traces of a doctrine of impermanence in palaeo-modernism, even in poetry, where Stevens articulates it clearly. But once again neo-modernism presses the point, and gives it practical application.

The most notable instance of this seems to be the neo-modernist *interest in chance*, a long way on from what Pope called "a grace beyond the reach of art." Although "indeterminacy" has affected literature, it has had more importance so far in music and painting, and these are the areas of theoretical enquiry. There is obviously room for teleological differences between artists who employ random methods. Duchamp argued that "your chance is not the same as my chance," and when he wrote random music in-

[5] "The Artworld," *Journal of Philosophy*, LXI, p. 571 (1964).

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sisted on regarding it as personal to himself and also funny. His dislike of order (perhaps as betraying him) emerges in his publishing the notes on *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même* in random order, so anticipating the cut-up-fold-in Burroughs techniques as he had anticipated the methods of aleatory music. Duchamp, incidentally, for all that he anticipated so many innovations, was always aware of a tradition, which he saw himself at the end of; he is a very sophisticated figure, and his critical superiority over some of his imitators is demonstrated by his immediate dismissal of the idea that there could be any relation at all between indeterminacy in the arts and indeterminacy in physics—this covert bid for prestige promotes nothing but confusion, of which (*pace* Peckham) there is quite enough already.

The layman who wants to know what Cage is up to has to confront the whole problem of chance. Without being at all solemn, Cage employs his considerable intellectual resources on constantly changing experiments of which the object is to ensure that his art shall be "purposeless play." Not for the first time in musical history, harmony (ideologically associated with ideas of order) had to go; it is replaced by "duration," as percussion replaces melody. Music now deals in every kind of natural sound (the extreme naturalism of Cage is attributed by Tomkins to the influence of Coomaraswamy) but every other kind of sound too, except what might be made by conventional instruments. The piano has bolts between the strings to make it simply percussive. As to indeterminacy, Cage achieves it by many methods, including the use of the Chinese I Ching, coin-tossing, and yarrow-sticks. In one piece every note required 18 tosses of the coin. He has now found speedier methods, using, like Rossini before him, the imperfections in paper as a suggestion for notes.

On this view of the matter there can be no question of judging a particular work. "There are no catastrophes," he says. But audiences can of course be affected in different ways, and Cage has experienced wildly various reactions from his auditors. Certainly he sometimes makes it seem that aleatory art is, in a manner as yet unexplored, close to humour, as in the view of some tragedy is close to farce. Tomkins quotes Virgil Thomson's account of a concert given in New York's Town Hall in 1958, which was

> a jolly good row and a good show. What with the same man playing two tubas at once, a trombone player using only his instrument's mouthpiece, a violinist sawing away across his knees, and the soloist David Tudor crawling around on

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> the floor and thumping the piano from below, for all the world like a 1905 motorist, the Town Hall spectacle, as you can imagine, was one of cartoon comedy... it is doubtful whether any orchestra ever before had so much fun or gave such joyful hilarity to its listeners.

This is very sympathetic, but Cage believes that "everything is music," and if, out of all the possibilities, he often chooses what makes for hilarity, this is evidence that such an assumption tends to confuse art and joke. There is a current of apocalyptism in all neo-modernism, and it is no bad thing that the Last Days should occasionally be good for a giggle, as they are in Beckett and in Tinguely. "When seeing a Tinguely mechanism for the first time," says Mr. Tomkins, "most people burst out laughing." Peter Selz, the Curator of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art, was delighted with the famous *Homage*, which destroyed itself successfully, though not quite in the manner planned by the artist, before a distinguished audience. "Art hasn't been fun for a long time," he said. Duchamp congratulated Tinguely on being funny, and said that humour was a thing of great dignity.

It is, no doubt, part of the picture that all this would have been less funny had it gone according to plan. The humour is a matter of chance, of "aleation." Aleation in the arts, I suggested, pushes into absurdity a theory based on observation, that chance or grace plays a role in composition. In so far as palaeo-modernism pretended to be classical, it played this down; but between it and neo-modernism stands surrealism, and other manifestations of irrationalism. On the new theory, which has a wild logic, you leave everything to chance, and the result will make its mark either as very natural or as providing the material from which the spectators in the right place will make whatever they need for their own satisfaction. Anything random has some kind of an order, for example a bag of marbles emptied on to a table. Or, as Monroe Beardsley puts it in that interesting section of his *Aesthetics* from which I have already borrowed, "they are in an order but not in order." The difference between aleatory art and the art which appealed to "the logic of imagination" (if for a moment we imagine them both as doctrinally pure) is simply this: the first in theory seeks only to produce an order (and in this it cannot fail) whereas the palaeo-modernists had not reduced grace to chance, and sought to make order.

So far as I can see this would be disastrous to aleatory art were it absolutely true, because the reason why we speak of "an order" as against "order" is that we drop the article as a sign of our wish to dignify what interests us more. We have discovered, in the process of getting by amid what Cage thinks of as the wonderful complexities of life, that order is more *useful* than an order: for example, the telephone book would be harder to use if the names were printed haphazardly. In a way, the alphabetical arrangement is perfectly arbitrary, but it happens to be something that the people who compose it and the people who use it agree upon. It might, of course, be said to give a very imperfect impression of the chaos and absurdity of metropolitan life, or life at large, and the consolation of knowing you can find your way about in it is in some ways on some very strict views perhaps somewhat fraudulent. It is not quite "order," anyway, though it is not merely *an* order. And this in-between order is what most of us mean when we talk about "order" in aesthetic contexts. One can avoid a divorce between art and life without going to the extremes recommended by Cage. When Cage grew interested in mushrooms, Mr. Tomkins tells us, he quickly discovered that some knowledge of their botanical classifications was a necessary modification to the practice of eating them at random. Also, that when somebody arranged a happening in his honour, which required that he should be physically assaulted, he had to say that whereas his view was still that "anything goes," this was so only on condition that one could manage to be free without being foolish. The implied criteria can only derive from the sort of education which distinguishes between an order and order. Order turns out to be more comfortable and useful. If our orientation towards it is not biological, then it is cultural or educational; and the reason why an order posing as order sometimes seems funny is that it is always presupposing orderly criteria by which its randomness can be measured; so, having reduced tradition to absurdity, one makes allusions to tradition by which the absurdity can be enjoyed as such. Thus silent music and Void or all-black painting presuppose music which employs conventional sounds and paintings with colour and shapes. They are piquant allusions to what fundamentally interests us more than they do, and they could not exist without it.

Aleatory art is accordingly, for all its novelty, an extension of past art, indeed the hypertrophy of one aspect of that art. Virgil Thomson, who has been very sympathetic to Cage, allows that his random music is not really a matter of pure chance but a game of which the rules are established by Cage himself. No matter how much he tries to eliminate his own choices, it is always a Cage-game, and it involves calculation and

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personal choice. Admirers of William Burroughs' *Nova Express* admit that the randomness of the composition pays off only when the text looks as if it had been composed straightforwardly, with calculated inspiration. The argument is too obvious to labour. Even Duchamp didn't pick up *anything* and sign it. What seems clear is that a gross overdevelopment of the aleatory element in art tends to make it approximate to humour; thus the 17th-century conceit, over-extended, became a joke, and Jan Kott can turn *King Lear* into an Absurd farce. The transformation would be impossible without the theory and practice of predecessors. Its nihilism is meaningless without an assumption of the plenitude of the past. Thus neo-modernists tend to make the mistake they often scold other people for, which is to attribute too much importance to the art of the period between the Renaissance and Modernism. By constantly alluding to this as a norm they despise, they are stealthy classicists, as the palaeo-modernists, who constantly alluded to Byzantine and archaic art, were stealthy romantics.

THE POINT that in theory there is nothing very new about the New, that it is in this respect little more than a reverie concerning the more important and self-conscious theoretical developments of an earlier modernism, was made by Harold Rosenberg himself, when he observed that an Oldenburg plastic pie is not so much art, and not so much a pie, as "a demonstration model in an unspoken lecture on the history of illusionism," adding that this kind of thing represents the union of many different tendencies in the art of the past half-century. As to why modernism should tend in this way towards pure farce, he cites Marx's observation that farce is the final form of action in a situation which has become untenable. Like Beckett's hero we can't and must go on, so that going on is bound to look absurd, a very old-fashioned thing to be doing in a situation you have shown to be absolutely new. On rather similar grounds he attacks the fashionable "aesthetics of impermanence," saying that the time-philosophy involved is evidently wrong, and that "art cannot transform the conditions of its existence."

Such comment amounts to a radical criticism of the theoretical bases of extreme neo-modernism, and it prepares one for the impact of one of Rosenberg's best essays, so far uncollected, which appeared five years ago in *Partisan Review* under the title "Literary Form and Social Hallucination." When the subject is literary, this critic seems to see with great clarity

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truths which become obscure when the topic is painting. He argues that the form of a literary work militates against its ability to "tell the truth"; that part of its function is in fact to "tease us out of thought" (an argument employed, though with differences, by Iris Murdoch). From the political point of view this makes form suspect, anti-liberal; for by inducing us to descend into "outlived areas of the psyche" it takes our eye off the actual demands and complexities of the world, arms us against the fact. It could perhaps be said that here the criticism is of Form when it ought to be of forms; that the constant researches of the arts into form have as a principal motive the fear that obsolescent *fictions of form* will cause them to be untruthful, or at any rate less truthful than they might be. Thus it is in the popular arts, where the question of fidelity to the world as the clerisy understands it does not arise, that conventions have the longest life. While the highbrows are pondering the *nouveau roman,* the great mass of fiction, which satisfies readers who would never dream of asking that it do more than a token amount of truth-telling, continues to use the old stereotypes.[6] It would probably not occur to the readers of such fiction that truth required the abolition of form, and if it did they might think the point too obvious to mention. Fiction, they know, is different from fact because it is made up. Yet it is precisely this point that, as Rosenberg sees, we need to be reminded of. Theoretical contempt for form in the arts is a fraud.

> Formlessness is simply another look and a temporary one at that. In time, organisation begins to show through the most chaotic surface . . . the subversion of literary form cannot be established except by literary means, that is, through an effort essentially formal.

This must be true, despite all the recent anti-formalist researches, aleatory, schismatic, and destructive. In neo-, as in paleo-modernism, research into form is the true means of discovery, even when form is denied existence. So it becomes a real question whether it helps to introduce indeterminacy into the research, even if it is agreed that this is possible to any significant degree (and it is not). With Danto's remarks in mind we can at least ask ourselves whether dependence on an erroneous or distorted theory cannot be in some measure incapacitating. We need not expect a simple answer, since a great deal that is done in the arts is founded on theoretical positions which are later found to be leaky. We should need to reflect that there is a certain prestige to be had in minorities by professing to concur with what appear to be revolutionary advances in thinking about the arts, so that to find an audience claiming proficiency in a "new" language is at present by no means difficult.

THIS IS NOT A PROBLEM one can discuss now. What one can do is to say of the theoretical bases of neo-modernism, in so far as they show themselves in relation to form, chance, humour, that they are not "revolutionary." They are marginal developments of older modernism. It can be added that disparagement and nihilist rejection of the past are founded partly on ignorance and partly on a development of the earlier modernist doctrine which spoke of retrieving rather than of abolishing tradition, just as the abolition of form is a programme founded on the palaeo-modernist programme to give form a new researched look. A certain extremism is characteristic of both phases. Early modernism tended towards fascism, later modernism towards anarchism. What Cyril Connolly calls the evolution of sensibility is a matter of changing theory, Romantic egotism becoming "impersonality" and this later turning into "indifference." In the same way chance replaces the quasi-fortuitous collocation of images characteristic of earlier modernism. The anti-humanism—if Mr. Connolly will allow the expression—the anti-humanism of early modernism (anti-intellectualist, authoritarian, eugenicist) gives way to the anti-humanism (hipsterish, free-sexed, anti-intellectualist) of later modernism. As to the past, history continues to be the means by which we recognise what is new as well as what is not. What subverts form is "an effort essentially formal"; and the sense of standing at an end of time, which is so often invoked as an explanation of difference, is in fact evidence of similarity. The earlier humanism went in a good deal for the capitalisation of what Mr. Rosenberg calls "outlived areas of the psyche," and so does the new modernism. For a "movement" united by a detestation of logic, Modernism has generated an immense amount of theory; this was admittedly much more coherently expressed in the earlier phase. Later it has been scrambled by the babble of smaller voices, and in some aspects has been heavily over-developed, as I have tried to show. In both periods there was a natural tendency (inescapable from the Modern at any period and easier to justify half a century back) to exaggerate the differences between what one was doing and what had been done by the old

[6] It is obviously in order to meet this situation head-on that Robbe-Grillet makes his fantastic claim to have at last found a novel-form acceptable to the man-in-the-street.

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guard, and this has helped to conceal the truth that there has been only one Modernist Revolution, and that it happened a long time ago. So far as I can see there has been little radical change in modernist thinking since then. More muddle, certainly, and almost certainly more jokes, but no revolution, and much less talent.

THAT IS WHY, on the one hand, one cannot accept Cyril Connolly's assurance that it is virtually all over, and on the other Leslie Fiedler's claim, recently mentioned in these pages, that we have a new art which reflects a social revolution so radical that he can call it a "mutation" and its proponents "The New Mutants" (*Partisan Review,* Fall 1965). Henceforth, he thinks, literature and criticism will forget their traditional observance of the past, and observe the future instead. Pop fiction demonstrates "a growing sense of the irrelevance of the past" and Top writers ("post-Modernists") are catching on. The new subject will be "the end of man" and the transformation of the human life into something else (curious echoes of Mr. Connolly, who also thinks of modern writers as post-Modernist in sensibility, and anti-humanist). Mr. Fiedler explains that he means by humanism the cult of reason, from Socrates to Freud. This is what is being annihilated, and the Berkeley students were protesting against universities as the transmitters and continuators of the unwanted rationalist tradition. The protest systematically *anti*-s everything: a Teach-in is an *anti*-class, banners inscribed FUCK are *anti*-language, and so on. Actually a teach-in is only an especially interesting class, because the teachers are volunteers and just as engaged with the subject as you are. There is the oddity that this class really works as a "dialogue" and goes on and on. The banners are no more anti-language than collage is anti-painting; and the absolutely blank banners which succeeded the "dirty" ones were certainly a very good joke in the new manner, like Rauschenberg erasing a De Kooning, or a Klein Void.

Fiedler's observations on the new life-style of his "mutants" are more interesting. He stresses a post-Humanist contempt for ideology; a post-Humanist sexuality which has discounted masculinity and developed characteristic patterns of homosexuality, usurpation of female attitudes, polymorphous perversity; and a new range of post-Humanist stimulants (*LSD,* airplane glue, etc.). This amounts, he argues, to "a radical metamorphosis of the Western male," a real revolt, unlike our ritual contentions with father. These young people have made the breakthrough into new psychic possibilities, and

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recognise in Burroughs the laureate of their conquest.[7]

Whether this is nonsense, and whether it is dangerous, is not in my brief. I will only say that the whole argument about "mutation" is supererogatory; the phenomena should be explained more economically. If the prole has replaced the shepherd, the savage, and the child as pastoral hero, it isn't surprising that those who seek to imitate him should imitate his indifference to ideology and history and sexual orthodoxies. This is not the first recorded instance of libertinage among the well-heeled. Drugs and four-letter words are not new, even among poets, even among the young. The display may seem unusually ostentatious, but it is worth remembering that Fiedler's prime example derives from that highly abnormal institution, the University of California, the unbelievably well-endowed organ of the educational aspirations of a state which is not only very rich but is famous for the unique predominance of the young in its population. In so far as the protest was "pure" protest, protesting against nothing whatever, it was surely luxurious attitudinising on a familiar undergraduate model but hypertrophied by sociological causes well within the purview of old-style analysis. A thirst for the unique and unprecedented can lead to the exaggeration of triviality or to claims which the record refutes. Thus Fiedler finds in Ken Kesey's (very good) novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* evidence that for the mutants the schizophrenic has replaced the sage as culture hero, whereas by narrating this madhouse fiction from the point of view of an inmate of limited and varying perceptiveness Kesey is using a now time-honoured technique. So with his sociological observations. Even the male behaviour to be observed after midnight on 32nd and 43rd Streets hardly needs to be explained in terms of "mutation." To treat such symptoms as unique, as signs that the Last Days are at hand, is to fall headlong into a very naïve —and historically very well-known—apocalyptism.

IT IS THE CONSTANT PRESENCE of more or less subtle varieties of apocalyptism that makes possible the repetitive claims for uniqueness and privilege in modernist theorising about the arts. So far as I can see these claims are unjustified. The price to be paid for old-style talk about "evolving sensibility" is new-style talk about "mutation." It is only rarely that one can say there is nothing to worry about, but in this limited respect there appears not to be. Mr. Fiedler professes alarm at the prospect of being a stranded humanist, wandering among unreadable books in a totally new world. But when sensibility has evolved that far there will be no language and no concept of form, so no books. Its possessors will be idiots. However, it will take more than jokes, dice, random shuffling, and smoking pot to achieve this, and in fact very few people seem to be trying. Neo-modernists have examined, in many different ways (many more than I have talked about), various implications in traditional modernism. As a consequence we have, not unusually, some good things, many trivial things, many jokes, much nonsense. Among other things they enable us to see more clearly that certain aspects of earlier modernism really were so revolutionary that we ought not to expect—even with everything so speeded up—to have the pains and pleasures of another comparable movement quite so soon. And by exaggerating the drawing, the neo-modernist does help us to understand rather better what the Modern now is, and has been during this century.

On the whole the older modernists understood all this better. Eliot in his last book, tired and unadventurous as it is, said it once again, and said it right:[8]

> A new kind of writing appears, to be greeted at first with disdain and derision; we hear that the tradition has been flouted, and that chaos has come. After a time it appears that the new way of writing is not destructive but re-creative. It is not that we have repudiated the past, as the obstinate enemies—and also the stupidest supporters—of any new movement like to believe; but that we have enlarged our conception of the past; and that in the light of what is new we see the past in a new pattern.

This does not allow for the possibility that chaos and destruction could be introduced into the programme, except by its "stupidest supporters"; but it does seem to make sense in terms of a quest for "what will suffice." In the end what Simone Weil called "decreation" (easy to confuse with destruction) is the true modernist process in respect of form and the past. Or if it is not we really shall destroy ourselves at some farcical apocalypse.

[7] It may be worth pointing out that Burroughs himself is far from thinking that drugs will bring this about. His recent *Paris Review* interviewer (Fall '65) asked: "The visions of drugs and the visions of art don't mix?" and he said, "Never.... They are absolutely contraindicated for creative work, and I include in the lot alcohol, morphine, barbiturates, tranquillisers...."

[8] *To Criticise the Critic.* Faber, 25s.

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Nabokov's Appendix

Notes on Prosody. By VLADIMIR NABOKOV. *Routledge*, 16s.

THE TRADITIONAL non-book is large and full of pictures; this one is small and full of tables, numerals, and funny words. These "notes on English and Russian tetrameters" originally—and justly—constituted an appendix to Nabokov's important translation-edition of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* (1964). Detached now from the only context that can give them meaning, Nakobov's observations on Russian and English verse structure flagrantly lack point. Gertrude Stein is reported to have told Hemingway that remarks are not literature; someone should tell publishers that an appendix is not a book. If this volume were titled *Pyrrhic Substitution in Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin"* and emitted by a sincere old lady—a candidate for a bad doctor's degree—from a minor American university press, how we should rail! How we should mock its pedantry and pity its insignificance! And yet for all its admirable energy and bustle, and for all its welcome gaiety, Nabokov's demonstration leads exactly to this small point—that Pushkin is a master of pyrrhic substitution.

But pedantry (at least the standard kind) and insignificance cannot be Nabokov's *métier*: everything must be twisted into at least a simulacrum of idiosyncrasy and portent. Distressed like everyone else by the inadequacy of the received English prosodic terms, Nabokov has programmatically obscured matters further by contriving his own terminology. "I have been forced," he says with an irony which becomes always more apparent as we press forward, "to invent a simple little terminology of my own." Thus what a mere graduate student, in his simplicity, would call a pyrrhic foot Nabokov calls a "scudded foot," or a "scud"; what an ordinary person would call a trochaic foot, or in a predominantly iambic poem an inversion of stress, Nabokov calls a "tilt." Whatever their necessity, these terms have at least the merit of comedy, and Nabokov, wit that he is, clearly revels in manipulating this mock-pedagogic language and thus in playing out the role of farcical pedagogue, as he has earlier delighted to play the roles of literate nympholept in *Lolita* and mad scholarly annotator in *Pale Fire*. Here, as if we were listening still to the wildly intelligent but fatally disordered zany who presides over *Pale Fire*, we are told of "semiscuds" and "split tilts"; we are vouchsafed terms like "scuddable" and fruity phrases like "a surge of scuds."

Sometimes the idiom of the bird-watcher, or even of the lepidopterist himself, takes over, as when we are invited to scrutinise "the rare 'long tilt'." This calling ordinary things by funny or magical names has always been a large part of Nabokov's happy stock in trade when he has appeared before us in his various comic *personae*: in *Pale Fire* it is the lowly blackhead which is elevated to mock-consequence by being denominated a comedo. But when, impatient of the ingenuousness of his prosodic predecessors, our author here finds it necessary to speak of the "false spondee" and the "false pyrrhic," he conducts us into something very like the world of Sick Fiction, where the farcical Guru-Daddy at the end of *Lollipop* assures Candy that what she is about to experience may resemble—deceptively—"the so-called 'orgasm'." We have had ample Camp humour recently: this is the first time we have had Camp prosody. It is as if Baron Corvo had essayed a treatise on metallurgy, or Ronald Firbank a manual of operating-room practice.

AND YET for the reader willing to plough through this wild heap of wit Nabokov provides compensations. When he tires of being cute, his awareness of metrical context is sensitive and instructive. As he says, "An iambic foot cannot be illustrated by a word unless that word is part of a specific iambic line." And valuable too is his brief discourse on the conventions and implications—largely whimsical or burlesque—that have attended the iambic tetrameter line in English. In Russian it became in the nineteenth century the staple line for serious verse, the equivalent in English of the iambic pentameter or in French of the syllabic hexameter. Why, on the other hand, does the English tetrameter imply so readily a vacation from the rigours of heroic sobriety and serious commitment? We think of Prior, Gay, and Swift. Nabokov rightly lays a large part of the blame on the enormous popularity and staying power of Butler's *Hudibras*, which transformed a line capable of emotional range in the hands of Surrey, Shakespeare (Sonnet CXLV), and Milton into a vehicle apparently more fit for "boisterous and obscure topical satire, the dismally comic, mock-heroic poem, the social allusion sustained through hundreds of rhymed couplets, the academic tour de force...." Although Nabokov forgets one recent master of the tetrameter—Yeats, who is not mentioned in the book—his point is just and important, even if it is a little hard on eighteenth-century English poetry.

Prosodically the Augustan Age is Nabokov's black beast: it is always "the pedestrian eighteenth century" or "that most inartistic of centuries." But this tired, automatic disvaluing

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of Augustan poetry is all based, apparently, on the eighteenth-century performance in tetrameter verse, and this is about as fair as judging twentieth-century poetry by its performance in, say, the limerick or the clerihew and then condemning the "century" for wanting emotional and aesthetic adequacy. Everyone knows that in the eighteenth century the tetrameter line was conventional for songs, fables, and various kinds of foolery and drollery, and that it was a line with a much richer spectrum of conventions—the strictly decasyllabic pentameter of *The Dunciad*, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, and *The Borough*—that poets of that century wielded with such memorable grace, wit, and power. All this is to be misrepresented because Nabokov, urged by his ambition to "compare," must have English tetrameters to compare with Russian ones.

And it is here that we are brought face to face with the weakness of the "comparative" method in criticism. The fact is that literatures, at least when regarded not thematically but technically, are not comparable, not if we know a language sufficiently to have become really adept in its literature. Perhaps novels in different languages can be talked about comparatively since scrutiny of their finest textures seems to most critics a less pressing obligation than inspection of their themes and architecture. Look what Nabokov does when he ventures technical comparisons of poems even within one literature: he compares apples with camels. He offers a few lines of—among other poems—Johnson's *On the Death of Dr. Robert Levet*, Keats' *The Eve of St. Mark*, and Tennyson's *In Memoriam* as somehow prosodically related and somehow prosodically relevant to Pushkin's verse-making. Actually these English samples are only very dubiously comparable in texture, for one is a domestic elegy in a version of hymn-stanza replete with overtones of the English Protestant sense of duty; another is a romance in couplets bearing entirely different, pseudo-medieval implications deriving from the "folk"-dimension of Bishop Percy's ballad revival and of its prosody; the last is a meaningfully redundant personal elegy in a very special stanza which determines powerfully its own metrical conventions. It is true that all these poems are "written in iambic tetrameter," but that information is of little use if we are really interested even in the mechanics of poetry. To be told by Nabokov of the *In Memoriam* extract that "I have chosen this as a particularly brilliant example of scudding (based mainly on monosyllables and partly owing to the repetition of a specific split tilt)" is to have the rhythm described but not interpreted. It is to abandon criticism for science, or pseudo-science. Prosodic

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talk ends as a mere pastime unless it finally locates specific links in specific poems between linguistic and metrical meanings. Nabokov tells us of *Eugene Onegin* that "There are several stanzas containing as many as five ["second-foot scudders": read "pyrrhic feet in the second position"]; and one stanza (One: XXI, Onegin's arrival at the theatre) breaks the record with six." But what we want is not the record-keeping of the hobbyist but the criticism of the expert: Nabokov does not tell us what relation there is between Pushkin's sense of Onegin at the theatre and a spate of unaccented syllables. If there is none, the prosody is accidental and critically undiscussible.

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NABOKOV'S ELABORATE "comparative" and "taxonomical" procedures do yield some conclusions that no one is likely to quarrel with. He finds that Russian prosody is different from English because the languages are quite different. Russian abounds in polysyllabic words having only a single accent. Russian poets are thus able to make omission of stress ("scudding") a common technical beauty. English poets, on the other hand, managing a language rich in monosyllables, have developed more fully than the Russians what the old-fashioned would want to call spondaic substitution. But we have always known that the two languages, not to mention the two cultures, are not the same. We would expect their poetries to be different.

Actually even in what appears to be one language, different poetries are not close enough to each other to be comparable except in the coarsest kind of classroom. The idioms and *genres*, and therefore the prosodies, of John Donne and Matthew Arnold—two of Nabokov's authors of "tetrameters"—are comparable only by the most generous sort of courtesy. It is all so much harder than Nabokov, with his amateur's unsteady tone—now airy and inconsequential, now perspiring and statistical—makes it out to be. He says early on that in his researches he has not found "a single work that treated English iambics—particularly the tetrameter—on a taxonomical and comparative-literature basis," and here he imagines that he is scorning the past instead of saluting its admirable sense of the uniqueness of separate languages and its happy disinclination to press specious and irrelevant comparisons.

But to say this much runs the risk of breaking a butterfly-collector upon a wheel. An appendix, no matter how skilfully excised, preserved, and exhibited, remains an appendix; whimsy, no matter how artfully disguised as scholarship or criticism, remains whimsy. And it is the whimsy of Nabokov's approach to poetic technique, his constant pursuit of the *outré*, his late-romantic impressionism and idiosyncrasy, that are finally the most striking things about this little volume. He has always delighted in parody, and what we have here is like a parody of a dissertation or a textbook. The *genre* he is working in is close to that of Pound's *ABC of Reading*, but if in Pound's work we catch the tones of an angry middle-western Populist of the late-nineteenth century, Nabokov's spiritual ancestry goes even further back. It extends through Lewis Carroll and Thomas Love Peacock to Laurence Sterne himself.

Paul Fussell

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Erich Auerbach

Literary Language and its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and the Middle Ages. By ERICH AUERBACH. *Routledge*, 35s.

ALMOST TWENTY YEARS ago, Erich Auerbach published one of the great critical books of our time. The power of *Mimesis* has increased, if anything, in the interval, but its original force owed something to the time and place of writing and to the exact moment of publication in the year after the end of the Second World War. Auerbach had been dismissed under the racial laws from his chair at the University of Marburg in 1935 and had gone to teach at the Turkish State University in Istanbul, where he remained until his migration to the United States in 1947. Had the Nazis never come to power and had he been able to remain in Germany, with continued access to good professional libraries, he might have written very different books. They would have been remarkable for knowledge and comprehension, for suppleness and strength, but they could scarcely have commanded the nobility of *Mimesis*. This is a function of the circumstances of exile.

This new book,[1] despite the specialist ring of its title, is as important as *Mimesis* for the modern literary public—given the impulse of that public towards self-preservation. *Mimesis*, it is true, remains the most comprehensive and general statement of Auerbach's view of European literature. But the more limited time-span of the new book allows him to be more specific about how "European philology" can lead to an understanding of the literary public of the past and its relevance to that of the present. Auerbach believed that the present generation is the last that could participate fully in the European classico-Christian literary culture which his books record with such humanity. Himself a majestic participant (how many of us can say that we know even a few of "his" authors as he does?), he can in this book focus upon the conflict between pagan and Christian notions, practitioners and consumers of literature just at the moments which are decisive not merely for their time but also for us, the literary public, the reading men of today. His own immense but unostentatious learning, and his exemplary interpretative and sympathetic powers, combine to show how, during the Middle Ages, the bases of European thought, the criteria of literary style, and the constitution of the literary audience underwent a fundamental change, the effects of which are still with us. Old Rome itself and its gods lost their significance except as *figurae* of the truth and the Roman grand manner gave place to a new and radically altered sublime style and a vernacular literary language. This is why we have a better chance of understanding Dante than Virgil. The sublimity of the *Divine Comedy* depends upon its being a record of a universally accessible experience in a language easily understandable but also unmistakably a literary language, a *Hochsprache*, and not upon a measured, commemorative, "distanced" grandeur of style and subject. Had it been Dante's intention to attempt such a thing, as we know from his own words, he would have chosen the superior *genre* of tragedy and the more lasting language of Latin. As it is, the *Comedy* is the climax of the humble-sublime style which came into being in late Antiquity and permeated the whole of medieval literature.

SERMO HUMILIS, the expression which forms the title of the first essay in the book, was the name given by ancient rhetoricians to the lowest of the three styles of discourse. As the mode reserved for the description of base and trivial events, in

[1] First published posthumously as *Literatursprache und Publikum in der lateinischen Spätantike und im Mittelalter* (Bern, Francke Verlag, 1958). Ralph Manheim's English translation is published in New York by the Bollingen Foundation.

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the courtroom and for entertainment, it would be appropriate to the incidents, either everyday or absurd, in the life of a carpenter's son in Galilee and his associates—fishermen and the like—concluding with his crucifixion between two common thieves. When the Christians' own account of these events reached the pagan public, it was dismissed as barely literate in manner and ludicrous in its claims. But what if these claims were justified and the carpenter's son was also God Incarnate? Folly to the Greeks (and to the Romans), and to the Jews a stumbling-block; but unto them that are called, the power of God. It would mean the annihilation of the old existence. Quite early, however, there are signs that the Christians, educated perforce in the pagan schools, had recognised the problem of the compatibility of classical literature and Christian life. One typical solution to the problem was St. Jerome's, who having been unable to bring himself to forgo the use of his library of pagan books, expiated his reading of Cicero by fasting. Then, in the anguish of his vision, he had found himself face to face with the Judge, indicted and condemned: "You lie! you are a Ciceronian, not a Christian." It was the books of God that must be read, not the books of men; and their eloquence was sufficient in itself without the extraneous assistance of classical style.

For Jerome, as indeed for Augustine, the cultivated convert, the Christian mode is existential, not literary. What Auerbach does is to make the stylistic implications explicit, and to focus attention on Augustine's radical modification of ancient rhetorical doctrine. The pagan critics of Christian literature, as of Christianity, demanded an answer from Augustine precisely because of his triumphant literateness. What if we Christians wish to write well? Within reason, we can plunder the classics and use our spoil for Christian ends, but this is an incomplete answer in the eyes of an educated pagan audience. As Christians what we must rather do is to accept the paradoxes of our religion and use them, attack instead of defend.

Cicero's truly eloquent man had been able to maintain an exact congruity of style with subject, speaking of "small things in a simple way, of middling things in the intermediate style, and of great things in the grand manner." He had been equally skilled to inflame, admonish, or instruct his audience in the style appropriate to his purpose. But if now the subject of all endeavour, in literature as in life, is reduced to one—that is to say the Christian revelation, which can never be lowly or intermediate—Cicero's system of differentiation loses its relevance. It will do for the law, but not for the spiritual matters with which the Christian orator deals. The Christian must bend the techniques of academic rhetoric to his own purposes. For him no subject can be absolutely base, since even the most apparently ignoble—petty finance, a cup of cold water—is a sign of the glory of God and a possible occasion for the use of the sublime style. Conversely, the deepest and most dazzling truths, the most sublime mysteries of the faith, can be embodied in the simplest and humblest, the most universally available style.

THIS REVERSAL IS ALMOST an Auerbachian "figura" of the Incarnation: the "spirit and level," as he calls it, of Christ's life and suffering have moved over into Christian literature and the pejorative connotations of the word *humilis* vanish. The *sermo humilis* of the Bible, with its lack of literary polish, its realism, its vulgarisms, like *eructare*, to vomit, and its barbarisms like *salvatio*, becomes an important theme in Christian apologetics. The style of the Bible, so far from being lowly and base, is held to possess a new and profound sublimity. The way is long before this Christian sublimity will reach its climactic European-vernacular poetic manifestation in the *Divine Comedy*, where it is (to quote a fourteenth-century commentator) "the divine style . . . sweet and plain, not lofty and proud

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like that of Virgil and the poets." Nevertheless, the decisive change has already taken place.

"Divine" was never Dante's word for his poem or its style. This was the contribution of the succeeding century, and it is arguable that, by the time it came to be applied so specifically, the Christian sublime had passed its peak. Certainly, its climactic moment comes with Dante. Not until he defined the great argument in terms of *sermo humilis* could the sublime re-emerge, addressed now to a public which extends—like the promise of the Incarnation—to all mankind. Author and audience might now participate equally in it and in the experience of which it tells, whether in joy and exultation as they contemplate the wheeling of the heavens, or in terror at the epiphany of the *Messo del cielo*, before whom the stricken souls fly like leaves before the wind.

This public is, in one sense, universal and, being so, it demands a literary non-specialised language, a *Hochsprache*. Auerbach's book ends with a magisterial survey of the decline of the pagan educated audience and the gradual growth of a cultivated public in the Middle Ages. The break-up of the Roman Empire, Auerbach's argument runs, entailed the loss of an educational tradition common, established, powerful and diffused enough to produce a literary language and a literary public. Their existence comes to an end in the sixth century: neither monastic scholarship nor the culture of the Germanic princely households is strong enough to replace them. Even the Carolingian Renaissance was grammatical, erudite, clerical and restricted, not literary and universal. It was perhaps even an obstacle to the European literary-historical process, which essentially involved the extinction of Latin and the rise of the vernaculars. Latin had still a major part to play; but the long evolution of the vernacular sublime culminated in Dante, who wrote in the vernacular, for an urban patrician audience, the first great—and still the greatest—European poem.

AUERBACH'S METHOD was to work by concentration on carefully selected and isolated key problems in (to quote the subtitle of *Mimesis*) the representation of reality in Western literature. By such means one might obtain insights, however fragmentary and partial, into the historical process—a sort of drama, Auerbach calls it—"from which we stem and in which we participate, a definition of our present situation. . . ." He is committed to a view of European classico-Christian cultural history which lays its emphasis on the transformation and enlargement of consciousness by Christianity, on the "recovery" of the sublime (a term he perhaps uses too loosely), and on the literary language and

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public. This is an excellent safeguard against eccentricity and triviality of judgment. But it may be that the concentration upon the representation of reality throws the emphasis too strongly on the effects of Christianity and too lightly on the conscious preservation of the learned tradition. His own language alone, we remember, could not bring Dante out of *Inferno*. He had first to show himself master in the *bella scuola*—Virgil, Homer, Ovid, Lucan, Statius and Horace—the solid block of tradition which made him a poet.

What is a poet's public and what the dynamics of literary change? Does he himself comprise the one and effect the other (as Cicero suggested)? Or is the public those preoccupied with the same problems, or cultivated society, readers at large? Which of these brings a style or a form to its perfection?

It matters little. Auerbach's "questions addressed to a text" invariably give him the means of presenting a stylistic problem in its most concentrated and interesting form, and his judgment of the moment of stylistic crisis is very exact. In all this, he owed much to his great teacher Leo Spitzer, whose *Stilstudien*, with their emphasis on the interplay of linguistics and literary history, he made the basis of his own method. Another comparison which inevitably suggests itself for the present book is Ernst Robert Curtius' *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, which appeared two years after *Mimesis*, in 1948.[2] Here, too, an academic title conceals vast implications: Curtius gives an exact and comprehensive statement of the debt owed by the Middle Ages to classical Latin literature both in form and in content, and asserts the continued solidity in modern European literature of the classical foundations, whether in their original form or as transformed by the Middle Ages. This book was an attempt at a topology of European literature, a demonstration of the enduring ancient conventions, both conceptual and verbal.

Curtius and Auerbach usually differ in their judgment of what is significant. Both are clear that "European philology" must set out from the contemporary situation and must involve far more than an academic study of the past. Whatever the organic links between the quality or the spirit and level of our life and our literature, we are still, after all our vicissitudes, Homer's or Virgil's, or Dante's, or Shakespeare's or Stendhal's audience; and in so far as this is so, Curtius and Auerbach speak directly of as well as to us.

J. B. Trapp

[2] Routledge, 1953.

EAST & WEST

The Trial in Moscow

"The man of letters is without recourse. He resembles the flying fish—if he raises himself a little, the birds devour him; if he dives, the fish eat him up." VOLTAIRE

THE LAST SCENE in Abram Tertz' *The Trial Begins* takes place in a prison camp where the narrator and his co-accused, having failed in their "essential duty to co-operate in the effort to bring the Glorious Future nearer," are now digging ditches. The recent Moscow Trial had a similar epilogue: Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel were sentenced to seven and five years respectively in a "strict régime" labour camp.

When the smuggled manuscript of the story came to the West in 1959, one could not help being fascinated by the strange, dramatic self-consciousness of the author; it was as if he was writing a scenario of his own fate. There was here a Pirandellesque double involvement in life and literature, and also perhaps, as in Greek tragedy, an element of impending destiny. At any rate, Sinyavsky sensed what was to come.

The Moscow Trial confirmed his ironical projections. Some ten years before he was judged by the criminal court in Moscow, Sinyavsky wrote:

> The contents of my story, except for the epilogue, had become known to some highly placed officials. As could be expected, the cause of my downfall was the dragnet mentioned earlier, which had been fixed inside the big sewage pipe underneath our house.
>
> The rough drafts I had conscientiously flushed down the drain every morning went straight to the Interrogator Skromnykh's desk. The important personage whose instructions I had carried out, though perhaps not altogether faithfully, was by this time dead and his personality was, indeed, undergoing a wide-scale public re-evaluation. Nevertheless I was accused of slander, pornography, and giving away State secrets.

We do not know, of course, just how long the true identity of Tertz and Arzhak was known to the K.G.B. The usual Soviet line, on the few occasions when their works were referred to by literary policemen, was that they were "bourgeois falsifications" (*burzhuaznye falshivki*). In *Inostrannaya Literatura* (Jan. 1962), B. Ryurikov poked fun at the Western reviewers of their

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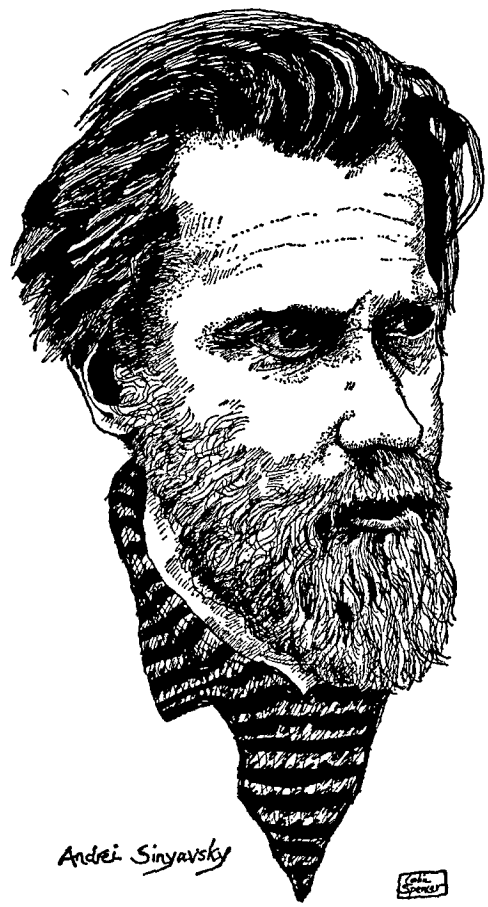
work because they did not realise that "Tertz" was a white Russian *émigré* who pretended to be a Soviet author living in Russia.

Among Western reviewers there were some who were inclined to accept this view. Giancarlo Vigorelli—the Secretary-General of COMES, who on 9 October 1965 first disclosed the news about the arrest of Sinyavsky and Daniel and was subsequently active in their defence—expressed the same opinion in *Tempo* (29 September 1965), taking his clue from "one of the best experts on Soviet affairs, Alexander Werth."

At that time Sinyavsky and Daniel were already in prison, and it took exactly three months before the fact was officially admitted. A semi-official confirmation came a bit earlier at a Press conference in Paris (22 November) where Alexei Surkov assured those present that the investigation would be "swift" and according to "strict norms of legality." Both he and Alexander Tvardovsky stressed on this occasion that there would be no return to the methods of the past; Tvardovsky added that he could not fail to be concerned about the arrest of Sinyavsky whose work appeared often in *Novy Mir*.



It was on 3 January 1966 that the first indication that the trial was about to begin came in a broadcast by Moscow Radio in English. The commentator, Boris Belitsky (known for his theory that the "Great Train Robbery" was organised by the British Intelligence Service, assured his listeners that the works of Sinyavsky and Daniel

> are libellous, malicious, and very often almost illiterate. The two men have clearly been tempted by the possibility of making easy money... they jumped at the possibility of mass-producing libel ...(which) is a crime in all civilised countries even when it is directed *against* a single individual, let alone a country of more than 200 million people.... Their punishment will undoubtedly have the backing of the Soviet public.

Belitsky was surprised "that some very esteemed men, of unimpeachable reputation, have deemed it appropriate to come out in defence of Sinyavsky and Daniel" and deplored "the excitement in certain quarters in the West, following their arrests."

BUT THE CLAMOUR in the West did *not* abate. On the contrary it grew, particularly after the publication on 13 January of the article "Turncoats" by Dmitri Eremin in *Izvestia*, which in its style of vitriolic mendacity could well compete with things written under Stalin. The two writers were said to be guilty of "double-dealing, shamelessness, moral degradation." They "spatter the paper with everything that is most vile and filthy," being interested "with morbid sensuality in sexual and psychopathological 'problems.'" They are not "simple moral perverts, but active helpers of those who would like to turn the cold war into a hot one." Sinyavsky used his "hooligan pen" to cast a slur on the "most sacred name" of Lenin, he "tried to imply that anti-semitism allegedly exists in our country," he was abusing Chekhov and other Russian classics. The article ended on a note which literally echoed, as Edward Crankshaw pointed out in *The Observer* (23 Jan.), the concluding words of Vyshinsky's speech for the prosecution in the Bukharin trial in March 1938.

The article and the "spontaneous" letters which have followed it in *Izvestia* were in flagrant contradiction with the directive on "Socialist Legality" of the President of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R., A. Gorkin, published in *Izvestia* on 2 December 1964. The President's directive deplored the practice of publishing articles in the Soviet press in which "before the case has been tried in courts the guilt of certain persons is taken for granted and the question of punishment to be meted out to them is decided in advance...."

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Another attack on the two authors appeared in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (22 January), and it purported to be an aesthetic evaluation of their artistic shortcomings. The critic, Zoya Kedrina (who was later to play the role of the "public prosecutor at the Trial itself) stated in the article that it was not for her to determine juridical guilt ("this is a matter for legal authorities"); she was just concerned with the qualities of their writings. She found that Daniel's *Moscow Calling* represented "simple fascism," that it was "anti-human not only in its content, but also in its form." The works of Sinyavsky were pornographic, exuding an "aroma" of anti-semitism, a plagiarism of Artsybashev, Sologub, Kafka, and Dostoevsky. His *Fantastic Tales* were full of thieves and prostitutes "who spend their illegal earnings on drink in restaurants." As for Tertz himself, he "is inseparable from his abominable characters," so negative and unrepresentative.

These and other denunciations of Sinyavsky curiously echoed his own ironic self-criticism in *The Trial Begins*:

> Another failing, gravely criticised, was that my positive heroes... were not portrayed in all the fullness of their many-sided working lives, but maliciously presented to the reader in their least typical aspects. As for the negative characters... it is true that in my slanderous story they were punished as they deserved, but the reactionary basis of their motivation was not fully revealed.

The "incriminating" quotations used (or referred to) by Eremin and Kedrina to prove Sinyavsky's "guilt" were either non-existent or out of context. They attributed to him thoughts emanating from the personages in his stories, a method which, as Max Hayward noted in *The Guardian* (25 January), could be easily used to "make Shakespeare out to be a murderer, Dante an incendiary, and T. S. Eliot a nihilist...."

In fact, Sinyavsky's ideas were often exactly opposite to those attributed to him. To impute his disrespect for Chekhov, Eremin used a quotation taken from an "internal monologue" of a character in Tertz' story, *Graphomaniacs*:

> Only the utmost shamelessness [Eremin wrote] can move the pen which writes lines like, "Just to take that Chekhov by his tubercular beard and push him nose-first into his own consumptive spittle."

This thought of an embittered graphomaniac was presented as Tertz' own, although in his essay on "Socialist Realism" he explicitly expressed his highest admiration for Chekhov (the writer who "feared pretentiousness like the plague"). Similarly, Tertz' satirical references to Soviet anti-semitism were presented as expressions of his own anti-semitic attitude. Proofs of his other misdemeanours were arrived at by similar methods.

THE IMPENDING TRIAL evoked anxiety and revulsion in the world. Articles, letters to the editor, protests and appeals by individuals and organisations to the Soviet authorities to reconsider their action against the two writers began to swamp the press. Emotions ran high and, unlike the time of the Boris Pasternak affair, there were no voices in the West ready to justify the attitude of the Soviet authorities. Even the usually sympathetic and friendly observers were shocked at this reversion to Stalinist practice. If anything, the protest from the "Left" was perhaps even more vocal than that on the "Right." The socialist *Tribune*'s strongly-worded editorial called on the Soviet government to "stop this stupid trial"; the *New Statesman* wrote that by staging it Soviet justice was putting itself on trial.

But it was the international community of writers and intellectuals which expressed the greatest concern about the fate of Sinyavsky and Daniel. Appeals for their freedom were coming from all over the world. David Carver (Secretary General of the International PEN) and Giancarlo Vigorelli (Secretary General of COMES) announced a joint action on their behalf and asked permission to be present at the trial.

The most impressive, and probably unprecedented, act of the international solidarity of writers was the letter to *The Times* (31 January) asking for the release of Sinyavsky and Daniel and signed by 49 most prominent writers from France, Germany, Italy, U.S.A., and Great Britain. The signatures read something like an honour roll of contemporary literature, and included François Mauriac, Günter Grass, Ignazio Silone, Alberto Moravia, W. H. Auden, Arthur Miller, Graham Greene. They stressed that their respect for the work of the two authors "is based solely on its literary and artistic merits" and that they regarded their books as "notable contributions to contemporary writing."

Thus on the eve of the trial, for the first time in its history, the Soviet Union found itself practically isolated on an issue, which might in political terms have been a minor one, but which now became a *cause célèbre*.

AFTER THE VIOLENT ATTACK on Sinyavsky and Daniel, followed by the "indignant letters" from readers, *Izvestia* published (30 January) an article by Yu. Feofanov which purported to be a defence of the rule of law:

> The law must stand above passions and emotions. And if those that serve the law infringe

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this very first commandment, we shall all suffer. For any retreat from the law means the direct road to arbitrary rule.... Let the law function without any [outside] influences....

Tartuffe himself would have blushed at such hypocrisy. This plea was in a paper which had initiated the libellous campaign against the two accused writers when they were held incommunicado in prison and the case was *sub judice* (and was later to publish Feofanov's one-sided reports on the trial). Another violent attack on Sinyavsky and Daniel was made just before the trial by the secretary of the Moscow section of the Writers' Union, M. S. Michailov, writing in *Partinaya Zhizn* (Party Life).

When the trial began, it became a matter of world-wide interest, agitating public emotions everywhere no less than the Pasternak affair did in its time. In a sense it was something of a sequel to it. Sinyavsky had helped to carry Pasternak's coffin at the funeral, and he was also the critic who did most to rehabilitate his Soviet reputation as a poet. But Pasternak was only persecuted, not prosecuted; Sinyavsky and Daniel (like Ivinskaya and Brodsky) were subject to criminal proceedings. Much of this was only too familiar but some things (the defiance of the accused, and the open support for them outside the courtroom) were unprecedented.

THE AUTHORITIES acted in a way which can best be characterised by the Russian saying about a girl who wants both to retain her virtue and to sell it for money (*"I chistotu sokhranit i denghi priobresti"*), morally a more emphatic dictum than the English one about eating one's cake and having it too. They claimed that the trial had been conducted within a strictly legal framework, that as *Pravda* (22 February) said, it was "an open public trial reported by the press." They have gone to great pains to stress that the accused had been given all the rights due them; they only succeeded in making the mockery of justice more transparent. As the Moscow correspondent of the *New York Herald Tribune* (14 February) put it, "in this case it included the right to be pilloried and ridiculed in the press, the right to be laughed at by a hand-picked audience of 70 persons in the court, the right to be told that they are not telling the truth in their answer to questions, the right to have only the prosecution side of the case reported in some detail to those who cannot gain access to the 'open' trial because they have no passes." No foreign correspondents or observers were admitted "because of lack of space." Friends of the authors who gathered in front of the court were not allowed in either. The latter, as *The Guardian* (11 February) reported, "told the

Moscow, 11 February

Scene: *Courtyard in front of building inside which Sinyavsky and Daniel are on trial. Soviet citizens are taking part in a noisy running debate on literature and freedom that would have been unthinkable ten years ago.*

Two policemen hear all, but make no move to break up the crowd, which is complaining of lack of freedom and the slanting of news in the Russian press.

A Youth: *"They could very well have held the trial in a larger hall. We should be allowed inside, as in any other court."*

A Communist: *"We have our representatives—Communist Party members—inside."*

The crowd jeers.

The Communist: *"Look, it's all reported in the papers."*

A Man: *"Who can believe that? We can't trust it."*

A Girl: *"No one knows what is going on in there. Why must we listen to the British Broadcasting Corporation to hear the facts about it?"*

The Communist: *"The foreign press is distorting the facts."*

The Youth: *"How do you know? Have you read the foreign press?"*

The Communist: *"No. But I know."*

A Boy: *"Why don't they publish the books (of Sinyavsky and Daniel) here so we can draw our own conclusions? This is something for public opinion. The public must judge."*

The Communist: *"I think that the policy of our Communist Party is right."*

The Man: *"I don't agree. The difference between us is that you have the right to say openly that the Party is right. I have no right to say it's wrong."*

The crowd, fluctuating between fifty and a hundred people, debates philosophically rather than angrily. There is no hint of violence under the warm winter sun.

A Young Man: *"Do we have to consider Lenin a god? Can't we criticise Lenin? And what about Stalin, the murderer?"*

The Communist: *"Lenin is everything. You can't question anything he wrote."*

A Girl: *"You shouldn't approve blindly of anything."*

A Man: *"I am a Communist and I have been misled by our press so many times. I'm afraid it will happen again now."*

A Woman *said that Sinyavsky and Daniel wrote anti-Soviet works.*

The Man: *"In which way do these anti-Soviet works actually attack the Soviet system and Soviet power? What is the Soviet system? What is Soviet power? Do they want the Czar back? Probably not. Do they plead for the restoration of private ownership? Probably not."*

A Student: *"We want to read their words. All we have now is taken out of context."*

BRITISH UNITED PRESS

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police bitterly: 'Of course it is an open trial. And we are here—in the open'."

However, some persons not committed to the cause of the persecutors were present at the trial, including the wives of the accused, Masha Sinyavsky and Larissa Daniel. (Friends and students gathered outside offered them bunches of flowers.) At some of the sessions a number of writers were present, among them the zealous Leonid Sobolev, the servile Alexander Chakovsky, the cowardly Konstantin Fedin, the unhappy Alexander Tvardovsky, and the youthful Evgeni Evtushenko.

Two members of the Writers' Union acted as "public prosecutors." The first was the already mentioned "purely literary" critic of Sinyavsky (and his former colleagues at the Gorki Institute of World Literature), Zoya Kedrina. The other was Arkadi Vasiliev, a novelist who has also worked as a journalist, a sailor, and a KGB investigator (in which capacity he might have read *The Trial Begins* before plagiarising it in one of his film scenarios).

The actual course of the trial can only be inferred from the Soviet press reports—the *Daily Mail* called it TRIAL BY TASS—and from the leaks which inevitably followed it, despite the precautions to keep the "open" trial closed.

The Trial Begins

THE REPORT on the first day of the trial by Yu. Feofanov in *Izvestia* (11 February) was entitled, "THE LAW RULES HERE," that of TASS in *Pravda*—"THE FACE OF THE SLANDERERS." Feofanov solemnly assured his readers that "the court cannot be quite sure until the case is carefully examined, until both sides are heard, until everything is explained which aggravates or mitigates the guilt of the accused." The presumption of innocence is thus replaced by the presumption of guilt; only its degree is in question. However, Feofanov had shown a proper concern that there "should not be the slightest doubt left" about it: "Only then truth will out and justice triumph."

Although "one side" prejudged the guilt of the accused, the "other side" denied it. As Feofanov sorrowfully put it: "At the preliminary investigation both, although denying the intent of waging anti-Soviet propaganda, nevertheless admitted that their works could and were used to harm our country. Now they are both denying everything...."

The TASS report was a poor substitute for the missing show of the show trial:

Judge: "Defendant Sinyavsky, do you understand the substance of the charges against you?"

ARKADY VASILYEV, *the "public accuser" representing the Union of Soviet Writers at the trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel in Moscow, has himself plagiarised the work of one of the men he accuses.*

In Sinyavsky's novel, The Trial Begins, *the boy Seryozha is being interrogated by the secret police. The Interrogator: "One thing I would like to get straight—how did you manage to get in touch with foreign agents?" Seryozha: "What kind of idiotic joke is that? Please remember, I have not so far been condemned, I am only on trial."*

And then, "the interrogator looked amused and drew the curtain back. The daylight was so clean and so transparent that you felt like taking a deep breath of it."

Interrogator: "Come here. Do you hear? It is you I am talking to."

Seryozha thought: Now he is going to strike me. His face stiffened.

"Look through the window," the interrogator said. "That's where they are, the people who are on trial. See how many of them there are?"

"The interrogator pointed at the crowds milling below. Then he stroked Seryozha's shorn head and explained gently: 'You are different now, my boy. You are not on trial. You are condemned.'"

Three years after The Trial Begins *appeared in the West, Arkady Vasilyev published in the magazine* Moskva *a film script entitled "Adopted Unanimously." It is the story of a young man unjustly persecuted by the secret police under Stalin. However, after Stalin's death the young man is made to realise that what had happened to him was insignificant compared with Soviet achievements. He joins the Party. In one scene a girl named Zina is being interrogated by police investigator Gerasimov:*

"Well, defendant, are you going to talk?"

"I am not a defendant, I am under investigation...."

"Gerasimov got up, went over to the window.... He beckoned to Zina with a finger: 'Come over here, dear girl, Come, come, don't be afraid.'

"Zina is at the window, Gerasimov explains to her: 'Can you see people walking?'... He repeats his question: 'Can you see them? Well, it is they who are under investigation.'" (Moskva, *December 1962, pp. 12–13.*)

Vasilyev, himself a former police investigator, according to the Soviet Literary Encyclopaedia, would appear to have been brought in on the Tertz case quite early. Otherwise, he could hardly have had access to a book banned in Russia. His appearance as a "public accuser" at the trial of Andrey Sinyavsky is the kind of farcical joke that Abram Tertz the satirist would greatly appreciate.

Under Soviet law, plagiarism is punishable by imprisonment up to one year, or a fine of 500 roubles.

THE GUARDIAN
(12 Feb. 1966)

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Sinyavsky (a small bearded man barely visible in the dock): "I do."
Judge: "Do you plead guilty?"
Sinyavsky: "Not at all."
Judge: "Defendant Daniel, do you understand the substance of the indictment?"
Daniel (tall, thin, with black, insolent eyes): "I do."
Judge: "Do you plead guilty?"
Daniel: "No, neither in part nor in full."

TASS commented: "Sinyavsky and Daniel are trying to escape responsibility for their crimes, although their hostile attitude has been confirmed not only by their slanderous anti-Soviet works but also by the testimony of witnesses and experts, and by material evidence.... Those present in the courtroom at times reacted noisily to the clumsy attempts of Daniel and Sinyavsky to avoid answers to the direct questions from the prosecution.... The accused often dodged direct questions; they are evasive. [But] during the questioning many quotations from their books are produced.... Daniel, however, tries to veil the political character of the transfer of his writings abroad." "What impudence!"—Radio Moscow commented—"They try to deny evidence, but they were put with their backs to the wall by the prosecution."

Feofanov mentioned one of these "backs-to-the-wall-quotations" contained in "the accusation which on the basis of systematically collected material shows Sinyavsky's and Daniel's face." It was as usual torn out of the context and, according to Feofanov, "characterised vividly the complete vileness of the accused." "One can hardly imagine [the *Izvestia* correspondent added] a greater moral fall." And what was this unspeakably foul moral infamy and crime? Why, it was a passage from *The Trial Begins* satirising the Stalinist demographic theory (since abandoned) and its attacks on Western "cannibalistic neo-Malthusianism." Sinyavsky used the method of *reductio ad absurdum* to poke fun at the idea that one can be unconcerned about the multiplication of human race *ad infinitum*. Karlinsky, the Counsel for the Defence (in that other trial, more fictitious, but no less real), thought that if the population were to go on growing unchecked, the Communists themselves would be forced to resort to some such method as the use of aborted human embryos to feed the increased population. "It would all be strictly in keeping with Marxism. Admittedly it meant a return to cannibalism, but... cannibalism on a more refined and altogether higher level."

In Feofanov's (and the prosecution's) argument the context was omitted and the thoughts of Karlinski were used almost to imply that Sinyavsky advocated the canning of human embryos for alimentary purposes.

THE TORRENT of abuse and distortion continued on the second day of the trial. Despite the accused's plea of "Not Guilty," Soviet media did not wait for the verdict, but proclaimed them guilty: TASS explained that "all the details of the case are being studied in order to determine the degree of the defendants' guilt." It also said that the accused maintained their defence, trying "to reduce the essence of their actions, which are punishable under the law, to purely literary, allegedly apolitical creations." Feofanov in *Izvestia* (12 February) reported—needless to say, under the title "THE UNMASKING"—that as the court began discussing *The Trial Begins*, "the same familiar grating words about 'the right of an artist to self-expression,' about literary conventions, hyperbole and so on" were heard from the defendant. With heavy irony Feofanov pointed out that "before the court are men who operate with literary terminology, aesthetic categories, and 'clever' words," that Sinyavsky included in his defence even such things as "a discussion of the 19th-century realism, [his] peculiar conception of socialist realism, and his view of the future of humanity." Apparently his meanderings were interrupted by the presiding judge:

> "Perhaps we can leave literary theory. After all, we are not conducting here a literary dispute, but criminal proceedings. You speak of the Soviet people as 'creatures of blood and dust.' How can you reconcile that with your love for the Communist ideals?"
> "I think that is an incorrect translation"—announces Sinyavsky to the laughter of the audience.
> "Why did you send to the West these monstrous slanders?"
> "I wanted to tell about the spiritual needs of the people" [laughter in court].

Feofanov commented that the accused were "trying to present themselves as original thinkers and they used lofty expressions. But the court, tearing away this verbal window-dressing, lays bare their hostile essence."

> "Let us turn to your own thoughts, expressed not in fictional works, but in literary, as you term them, meditations. You know the work *Thoughts Unaware*?"
> "Yes, that is my book."
> "Was it published abroad?"
> "Yes."
> "Let me quote then.... 'Drunkenness is the *idée fixe* of the Russian people.... A nation of thieves and drunkards incapable of creating a culture!'..."

Predictably, *Pravda* (12 February) called it "a monstrous smear on the Russian people" and Feofanov in *Ivzestia* was indignant: "How low can a man fall to write in this way about a people that is amazing and delighting the

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world with its achievements!" *Pravda* noted that Sinyavsky exhibited "an amazing cynicism" in "blabbing about his love of the Russian people"; Feofanov reported his words:

> "You see, I love the Russian people.... [The presiding judge quietens spectators' laughter.] You cannot accuse me of predilection for the West. I have even been called a Slavophile...."

These, said TASS, were "hypocritical assertions" and *Izvestia*'s correspondent added: "It is impossible to escape quotations."

And, indeed, it is. The words quoted by the prosecution form part of Sinyavsky's reflections on the Russian people (pp. 31–33 of the manuscript). He is exasperated there with some of its characteristic ways, but admires some others, and no doubt there is about it a loving concern for his people. One thought ends with the words: "Who will dare to judge [them]? When the judgment comes." Another ends with the reflection on "how difficult it is to govern" the Russians—"how difficult it is for our administrators to deal with us!"

YULI DANIEL received similar treatment. Feofanov called him a malicious enemy who "twists, turns, and plays buffoon like the most banal criminal." The correspondent of *Izvestia* added that although "during the court proceedings the works of the defendant were necessarily abundantly quoted," his conscience simply didn't permit him to mention them in print:

> "One cannot hear without wrath how the name of Marx has been sullied—a name dear to all progressive mankind, to all our people."

This refers presumably to Daniel's story, *The Man from* MINAP, whose hero can determine the sex of a child at coition (by thinking of Karl Marx). Daniel was obviously unaware of the neo-Marxist cult of immaculate conception.

Feofanov's tender conscience permitted him, however, to mention (how accurately?) an exchange about another work of Daniel:

> *Prosecutor*: "Tell us, Daniel, what ideas did you want to express in the story, 'Moscow Calling'?"
> *Daniel*: "I was interested in an analysis of the psychology of people finding themselves in an extraordinary situation. I had no political motives. This is purely psychology."
> *Prosecutor*: "What are these extraordinary conditions?"
> *Daniel*: "You see, I wanted to draw a fantastic situation, to place the heroes in unusual conditions. This is fantasy."
> *Prosecutor*: "But why then did you not place the action, say, in ancient Babylon? Why do you allow these fantastic foul things to relate to your own people?"
> *Daniel*: "This is artistic usage."

Feofanov commented here that "for the *n*-th time Daniel tried to reduce the dialogue to the problems of literary creation, [but] the question in the court is not about particular features of Daniel's works, but about his criminal actions."

It is not surprising that *Le Monde* (12 and 13 Feb.) referred to the official reports on the trial as "totally lacking objectivity" and to the exchange in the court as a "dialogue of the deaf." Similarly the *New York Times* (12–13 Feb.) pointed out that "the two sides have often seemed—from Soviet press reports—to be talking past each other...." But perhaps the most pithy comment on the trial was made outside the courtroom by a Soviet man in the crowd who was reported as saying (*N.Y. Herald Tribune*, 12 Feb.): "There has never been anything like it in the history of literature."

NO FURTHER EXCHANGES between the prosecution and the accused were reported in the Soviet press. The third day of the trial was devoted to the examination of the witnesses (some of them friends called on to give evidence against the two authors), the speeches of the state and public prosecutors, the speeches for the defence, and the last remarks of Sinyavsky.

In his report in *Izvestia* (13 Feb.), Feofanov asked a relevant question:

> "*How could it happen* ... that two relatively young men, living amongst us, educated in a Soviet school and then in the Soviet university, have suddenly become accomplices of our worst enemies?"

To which he gave the irrelevant answer that it was due to "the extreme lack of ideological discipline and moral irresponsibility of the accused."

> "Alas, since 1956 when Sinyavsky began to write his lampoons, there was no one among his friends and acquaintances who reading or listening to the anti-Soviet works of Sinyavsky and Daniel, would appraise these writings as they deserved and who would express his opinion with all the necessary straightforwardness."

There was a touch of lament about this retrospective call for denunciations by friends and colleagues. But two members of the literary community, the "public prosecutors," Vasiliev and Kedrina, could make up for it now. They "stigmatised the foul actions of the accused in the name of the literary community and asked for their severe punishment." The gist of their speeches was given in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (15 Feb.).

Vasiliev denied that the two authors belong to Soviet intelligentsia or that their writings have any artistic merits:

> "Can the concoctions so full of murders, sexual perversions, and psychological abnormalities be

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called works of art? Sinyavsky-Tertz has a pathological tendency to obscenity and pornography. Obviously, this was particularly attractive to the foreign 'connoisseurs of blue art'."

Vasiliev also reported the charge that "what is most blasphemous in the dirty tirades of Abram Tertz and his heroes are the gibes about the name most dear to the Soviet man, the name of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin."

> "I must make a digression here. Sinyavsky, on his own admission, succeeded in getting from his [foreign] customers two jackets, two sweaters, a white nylon shirt, rubber shoes, a subscription for a journal, something for his wife, and something for his son. Not much! But I consider that even that was too much. The bosses of Sinyavsky had every reason to pay him even less. The point is that many opinions about Lenin were copied by Sinyavsky from the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. One can see it easily by glancing at the journals *People's Cause* and *Vpered* for 1918. How can one speak here about honesty, when even while working for his real bosses, Sinyavsky acted as a petty swindler?"

In his concluding words Vasiliev played a jingoistic note. Referring to the war [of which both authors are veterans], he declared:

> "I accuse Sinyavsky and Daniel in the name of the living and in the name of those who have fallen.... Whoever raises his hand against the people will be unmasked as a pseudo-hero, as a phenomenon doomed and condemned to annihilation by the revolution. In the name of all Soviet writers I accuse Sinyavsky and Daniel of the most serious crime and ask the court for a severe punishment."

THE OTHER "PUBLIC PROSECUTOR," Zoya Kedrina, made a similar plea. She stressed that "it is not at all accidental that one of the anti-Soviet articles of Sinyavsky was devoted to the 'destruction' of Socialist Realism" in literature, and stated:

> "On the recommendation of the writers' organisations of our country, and in supporting the demand for the punishment of Sinyavsky and Daniel for their criminal deeds, I am striving to defend our soil and our literature from the dirty encroachments of the underlings of the anti-Soviet propaganda."

The state prosecutor said in his summing-up that the two writers had tried "to undermine and weaken" the Soviet Union with their books which were "a mockery of everything that is dear and sacred for a Soviet man, the fatherland, the Communist ideals, the Soviet way of life, and the morality of the Soviet people." No details of the speeches by the counsels for the defence were mentioned at all in any of the Soviet reports on the trial.[1]

SINYAVSKY'S OWN LAST remarks were summed up in two lines: they report his works were "written from idealist and not Marxist positions."

However, the Soviet authorities have not succeeded in silencing Sinyavsky completely. A partial transcript of his self-defence reached the Milan daily, *Il Giorno,* and was published there on 24 February. There seems to be little doubt about its authenticity, as many details in it correspond precisely to the information given by Mrs. Larissa Daniel to the Moscow correspondent of the *N.Y. Herald Tribune* (23 Feb.) in an interview describing the defence pleas of the accused.

Sinyavsky took a bolder stand in his final statement than even the (tendentiously reported) exchanges with the prosecution would suggest. He maintained his position of defiance and complained about the way the trial has been conducted:

> "What makes my defence difficult is the particular atmosphere which has been created in this courtroom.... The arguments of the prosecution have not convinced me: I hold to my previous position. The prosecution has created in effect a wall of deafness through which it is impossible to get any truth.... [It] has succeeded in creating a curtain, a particularly electrifying atmosphere which destroys reality and carries us into the grotesque: as in the works of Arzhak and Tertz."

He exposed in some detail the methods of the prosecution:

> "To break this atmosphere is extremely difficult. Neither arguments, nor artistic concepts are of much help. Already during the preliminary investigation I saw that they would not be of any interest to the prosecution. It is not interested in aesthetics, but only in quotations torn out of context and endlessly repeated. I do not intend to explain my creative ideas, hold a conference, beat my head against the wall, or demonstrate anything. It would all be useless. I only want to suggest some elementary truths about literature. The most elementary truth for anybody whose concern is literature is that the word is not an act but only a word, that artistic imagination has a conventional character, that the author does not identify himself with the protagonist."

Sinyavsky noted the Pirandellesque irony of the situation and pointed out that the consciousness of it affected also the prosecution:

> "In a strange and unexpected way the artistic imagination loses here its conventional character;

[1] Some, like Professor Harold Berman of the Harvard Law School, consider the trial "a legal gain" because the "defendants were not forced to plead guilty and were allowed a vigorous defence." (*N.Y. Times,* 17 Feb.)

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the charges are so literal that the judicial procedure becomes linked with the text as if it were its natural sequel.

"I had the misfortune of putting the date of 1956 on the epilogue of the story *The Trial Begins*. The author has slandered 1956! He wanted to predict... well, you *will* do forced labour in 1966. The tone of malicious satisfaction has been quite explicit in the speeches for the prosecution."

Sinyavsky's ordeal through quotations did not prevent him from revealing them for what they are:

"All these tremendous quotations used in the act of accusation are repeated dozens of times and are accumulating in a monstrous atmosphere which corresponds no longer to any reality.... We are facing here a monstrous inversion of significance. Globov, the hero of *The Trial Begins* expresses anti-semitic sentiments in line with the directive at the time.... It is clear that the story is against anti-semitism; it deals with the 'doctors' plot.' But no, the author must be an anti-semite. Why then not also make him a fascist?... The concept of 'anti-semitism' is usually linked with that of great power chauvinism. But evidently we are facing here a particularly subtle author. He hates the Russian people. He has contempt for the Jews. He hates everybody—his mother, all humanity. The question arises: where could monsters like us have sprung from?... From somewhere, evidently from America. Somebody must have dropped us down by parachutes, Daniel and me, and we began to demolish everything. What scoundrels we are! ... It is difficult though to assert that Daniel [a Jew] is an anti-semite. Here we are then: the fascist Daniel hand-in-hand with the anti-semite Sinyavsky trampling underfoot everything that is most sacred...."

An aside to the "public prosecutor":

"The public prosecutor Vasiliev was not ashamed to mention some napkins which were given as a present to my baby... by a French lady. One brings up even the laundry list to demonstrate that in both cases behind an honest façade is hidden a stealthy nature."

What of the charges of "two-facedness"?

"There were also some new aspects. Which? First of all to condemn the political clandestinity as the clandestinity of the degenerates, of cannibals with the lowest instincts.... My articles were quoted here to show that I was writing on Socialist Realism from Marxist viewpoints here in Russia and from idealist positions abroad. Well, if I could write here from an idealist standpoint I would have done it. When I was asked to do some [literary] work here in Russia, I frequently rejected it and tried to occupy myself only with the authors with whom I felt affinity. ... I wrote about Tszetaeva, Mandelshtam, Pasternak.... I tried everything possible to express my real thoughts as Sinyavsky. Because of this I was in trouble. I received admonitions and reprimands in the press and at meetings.... Kedrina knows it only too well. She was my colleague in the [Gorki] Institute. She knows that I never played the hero, never made speeches at meetings, never made a *mea culpa*, never talked in slogans. On the contrary, I was often criticised for errors, deviations, and imprecisions."

Sinyavsky ended his speech with a criticism of a black-or-white conception of literature:

"One wants to judge works of art with criteria of propagandistic stereotypes.... According to the prosecution, literature is a form of agitation and propaganda. Now, agitation can only be Soviet or anti-Soviet. And if it is not Soviet, this means it is anti-Soviet. I cannot share this view. ... At this point the law of either-or begins to function.... Who is not with us is against us. At certain times—in revolution, war, civil war—this logic may even be just. But it is very dangerous in time of peace, particularly when it is applied to literature.... I hold in all conscience that one cannot judge literature through juridical formulae. In fact the nature of artistic imagination is complex and often the author himself cannot offer explanations. I think that not even Shakespeare would have been able to do it if he were asked to explain the significance of *Hamlet*. (Not that—let's be clear about it!—I want to compare myself to Shakespeare; I hope this will not occur to anybody.) And what is the significance of *Macbeth*? There are difficulties here. Not even Shakespeare would have been in a position to give a precise answer."

It must have taken some courage. He was talking to the same audience which would receive his prison sentence with applause (*Pravda*, 15 Feb.). He could not know about the world-wide support for him, the various appeals made on his behalf abroad, about the commotion which the case has created in all literary circles. And he made his speech *after* the prosecutor demanded the punishment of seven years in prison, thereby practically forfeiting any chance of a lighter sentence. (Curiously enough, on the same day *Komsomolskaya Pravda* reported that criminologists had established the authenticity of a letter Alexander Pushkin wrote to Tsar Nicholas I admitting the authorship of a blasphemous poem, *Gavriliada*. Pushkin threw himself "upon the Tsar's mercy.")

By his stand at the trial Sinyavsky has not only shown courage. He also administered a small effective lesson in literary criticism: authors cannot be identified with characters in their books, for in one of his own, in the prologue of *The Makepeace Experiment*, the narrator says:

"If I am caught, I'll deny everything. If I have to stand my trial, hands and feet bound, face to face with a terrible judge, I'll recant...."

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THE FOURTH DAY of the trial was devoted to the final plea by Daniel which lasted an hour. TASS reported from it only his denial of "acting with malicious intent" and his admission that he "made a mistake" in sending his works abroad for publication.[2] The interview with Mrs. Larissa Daniel in the *N.Y. Herald Tribune* provided some more details, including Daniel's defence of his co-accused from the charges of "anti-semitism." As Daniel told the court:

> "Sinyavsky had a friend Daniel, who was a Jew. The wife of Daniel was a Jew, and Golomshtok [a co-author with Sinyavsky of the booklet on Picasso; a friend of both defendants; and a recalcitrant witness at the trial who was himself threatened with prosecution afterwards] was a Jew. Why would the anti-semite Sinyavsky have these Jewish friends? . . ."

Daniel also referred to the purges of Soviet writers and artists, mentioning the fate of Leib Kvitko, the Yiddish poet executed in 1952, Osip Mandelshtam, who died in a concentration camp in 1938, and Isaac Babel and Vsevolod Meyerhold who died in similar circumstances in 1941 and 1942 respectively. Apparently he then asked rhetorically:

> "Who is responsible for this?"

and he answered:

> "I am. You are. All of us are. Maybe I am not right about this, but I can think of no other answer."

When the verdict was announced nobody was left in any doubt who was responsible for the fate of Sinyavsky and Daniel. When it was all over, the professors and dons of literature at Moscow University approved the verdict and castigated the "traitors" in a letter to *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (15 Feb.); two days later the Soviet Writers' Union expelled Sinyavsky; on 1 March a government spokesman promised the publication of "a detailed account" of the trial.

THE WORLD REACTION to the heavy sentences given to them was probably not anticipated in the Kremlin. Its rulers succeeded for the first time in creating a "united front" on this issue—against themselves. It embraced *l'Humanité* and *Le Figaro*, the *Daily Worker* and the *Daily Telegraph*, Louis Aragon and François Mauriac, W. H. Auden and Alberto Moravia, Ignazio Silone and Graham Greene.

The only support came from rather tainted quarters. The pro-Chinese Belgian Communist journal, *La Voix du Peuple* (25 Feb.), warmly approved what it called with satisfaction "a real political trial." It said, however, that it would not be much help to the revisionists Brezhnev and Kosygin, who "hide behind the verdict on Sinyavsky and Daniel as if it were a smoke-screen for the continuation of their dirty acts of treason. . . ."

Shortly after the Moscow trial a symbolic act in London was to crown it all: the Russian re-interment of the remains of Alexander Herzen's friend, Alexander Ogarev. When his coffin left the Greenwich cemetery, the Soviet representative in England declared that "Ogarev will get a hero's welcome when he returns to Russia—a Russia freed, as he wished, from Tsarist oppression." (*Daily Mail*, 25 Feb.).

On 2 March Ogarev was re-buried in Moscow, and Alexei Surkov made a speech on the occasion. Ogarev's poem "Freedom" (published in 1958 in a Russian journal in London, *Polarnaya Zvezda*) was quoted:

> *"All through my life, again and again and again,*
> *One unalterable word reverberated—*
> *Freedom! Freedom!"*

A passage from Herzen might also have been quoted (and the Judge and the Prosecutors will find it on p. 561 of Herzen's *Selected Philosophical Works*, published 1956—in Moscow) but woe to any writer who reads these words over a grave in the homeland:

> "Was there ever a country with censorship and arbitrary government where secret print-shops and the underground distribution of manuscripts didn't exist once intellectual movements and the desire for liberty existed? That is just as natural a state of affairs as the publication of material abroad and emigration. . . ."

Leopold Labedz

[2] The editorialist in the *Times Literary Supplement* (17 Feb.) remarked in an article condemning the trial: "Admittedly he [Sinyavsky] and Mr. Daniel may have been unwise to by-pass the Soviet literary machine (whether or not they realised the risks involved) instead of exerting their talents within it, as Mr. Sinyavsky was prepared to do with his critical writings under his own name." When Sinyavsky was asked during the trial why he did not publish his books inside the U.S.S.R., he replied: "My artistic preoccupations differed from those of the editors" (*Le Monde*, 13–14 Feb.). As to the question of risks, they can perhaps be realised better in Moscow than in London. In most of Sinyavsky's and Daniel's works one can see that fear of arrest was constantly in their minds.

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LETTERS

Nabokov, Pushkin, Wilson

MR. NABOKOV is hissing and shrieking again. I don't know why he chooses to do it in ENCOUNTER rather than in the *New York Review of Books*, where the controversy about his translation of Pushkin's *Evgeni Onegin* has hitherto been conducted. It is unfortunate—though not perhaps for Mr. Nabokov—that the readers of ENCOUNTER may not have seen my original article or the correspondence which followed it. A considerable part of the letter to ENCOUNTER has already appeared in the *New York Review*, and I have dealt there with the questions it raises. I don't propose to recapitulate here. As for the additional apologetics: there is no need to discuss the absurd justifications for the absurdities of the Nabokov translation. I do not, of course, object to the use of unusual words. Both W. H. Auden and Compton Mackenzie have sometimes used them with excellent effect, and so sometimes has Mr. Nabokov in his novels. But such words as those I cited in my review of the Nabokov *Onegin* make Pushkin appear grotesque, as he never is. (Of course, the computer I speak of in connection with Mr. Nabokov's style would have to be fed at random from the large Webster's dictionary.) Mr. Nabokov's ideal of "literal" translation I am unable to comprehend. A translation that was truly literal should not contain either the definite or the indefinite article, since these do not exist in Russian. The word *byre*, by the way, is not American but British. If you referred to the cow-barn as a "byre" in New England nobody would know what you meant. This error has not only doubled me up with mirth, it has caused me to roll on the floor exsufflicate with cachinnation. (If anyone should question the propriety of this phrase, he will find it used by Bernard Shaw in one of the stage directions of *John Bull's Other Island*.)

EDMUND WILSON

New York

Interpreting the Vinland Map

IN HIS review of *The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation* Mr. G. R. Crone [ENCOUNTER, January] rightly points out that the question of the Norse discovery of America is not at issue. It is no less true that agreement on the authenticity of a document is a necessary pre-condition for discussion of its significance. What Mr. Crone means by "authenticity" in this context is not at all clear; he seems to be hedging his bets, and does not explicitly commit himself to modern counterfeiting. Professor E. G. R. Taylor, who—like Mr. Crone—had an opportunity over three years ago to examine the Vinland Map (in photo-copy) and to read my study of it, accepted no such inhibition, even if her conclusions, of which a summary has recently been published, are not upheld by her arguments. Mr. Crone's notice, rather surprisingly, brings into question the objectivity of a reviewer who can misrepresent not only statements in the book under consideration but even map-making practice in a field and period familiar to him.

The lack of information on the previous history of the Map is disconcerting, but not without precedent. The authors of the monograph do not disclose "its former home" because (as Mr. Crone is aware) they do not know it. The statement that "it is believed to have come from a Spanish library" has not appeared in print before, and one wonders about the reviewer's authority for making it. To suggest however, as he does, that no important or valuable maps are likely to remain "in obscurity" today is either naïve or disingenuous. Within the last eight years we have seen the emergence of at least two such maps—the world map of Henricus Martellus now at Yale and a second copy of Waldseemüller's woodcut globe gores of 1507, both from private collections and hitherto unknown; an unrecorded world map by Vesconte Maggiolo is in private ownership in Italy; and there are doubtless others.

The palaeographical and bibliotic evidence associating the Map with the accompanying texts is swept under the carpet by Mr. Crone in a very perfunctory way. One example of his partiality in referring to this evidence is illuminating. Dissimilarity, in texture and quality, between sheets of vellum in a codex is to be expected. That the half-sheet of vellum on which the Map is drawn matches a half-sheet of the textual manuscript is not without significance.

The most striking—and perplexing—feature of the Map is (as all other commentators have agreed) its delineation of Greenland. Here Mr. Crone seems to be divided against himself. He recognises that "the outline of Greenland bears a certain resemblance to that of the island as we know it today"; and he asserts that "with the instruments and technique of those days, no such accurate outline would have resulted." But, in order to establish his claim that "the authors have set too high a value on this Map," he declares the "'resemblance'... to be far-fetched" and suggests that "it is a better attempt at South America." This is hardly serious argument, and in disputing the fidelity of the representation Mr. Crone appears to be in a minority of one. This question I am content to leave to the judgment of the majority; but I wish that, before attributing to me "the argument ... that the outline of Greenland is so good that it *must* be based on the result of a running survey made on a voyage of circumnavigation," Mr. Crone had read more carefully page 195 of my study, where alternative hypotheses are set out, with considerably greater caution than he implies and no commitment to any one of them.

In the nomenclature of Atlantic islands in the Map Mr. Crone finds "mystification or even falsification," and he infers that it was "made up *ad hoc*." Here I cannot follow him. Of the four names which he cites, only one cannot be "paralleled on surviving charts," and he himself (scholarly habits reasserting themselves) supplies a convincing parallel for it which I had overlooked. The forms

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of all four names lie within the limits of variation, interpretation, corruption, or mistranscription to be found in the work of 15th-century scribes and copyists.

NEITHER MR. CRONE NOR I need be surprised to find in a medieval map "almost dog Latin," such as he detects in the name attached to England. We could both cite from such maps (including that of Bianco) many examples of latinity so debased and corrupt as often to be almost unintelligible. Their draughtsmen were not necessarily scholars, and Mr. Crone's comment here seems irrelevant, unless to support his contention that "the man who produced [the Map] was a copyist, not a cartographer." This is a distinction which must often be made in studying an early map; and, as pointed out in the monograph, the Vinland Map as we have it is plainly a copy and not an original compilation. The distinction however does not invalidate the evidence of such a map, nor justify Mr. Crone in denying "serious consideration" to it and throwing "very serious doubt" on its authenticity. A contributor to the discussion following Mr. Crone's paper on the Hereford Map, read at the Royal Geographical Society in May 1965, remarked:

> "One difficulty in considering medieval maps is that so many of them are obviously copied by a scribe or draughtsman who was no geographer, and copied very often from a model which we no longer have, so that it is difficult to disentangle the features of the original from the corruptions which he has in his ignorance introduced."

As to the relationship between the Vinland Map and the world map of 1436 by Andrea Bianco, Mr. Crone makes three points. First, he believes that the former "is based almost entirely on Bianco's world map" and that "it is unnecessary to search for possible alternative sources or models." But analysis of the nomenclature reveals too many divergences to allow this simple solution; and to dismiss them all as "mystification or falsification" is to argue in a circle. Their cumulative testimony and their character make it very difficult to accept Mr. Crone's second contention, that the southern coastline of Africa in the Vinland Map reproduces a fold in the surviving example of Bianco's map preserved at Venice. Although this is a neat point (in fact the only substantial one in the review), Mr. Crone's inference from it that "the compiler of the Vinland Map was working from this very copy of Bianco's" is by no means the only one that could be drawn, and I wonder whether he has thought out all the assumptions which it carries with it. This is a very slender thread to carry the weight of proof that, as Mr. Crone argues, the Map is of post-Columbian date.

FINALLY, I AM SAID to have misread the "gulf" shown by Bianco in the south coast of Africa, by failing to observe the tracing of a continuous curved outline "marking off this area from the ocean." The double representation did not escape me, and when I looked at the original map in the Biblioteca Marciana last year I examined this part of it with particular care. Mr. Crone would, I think, find it as difficult as I did to decide that the colour (indicating a gulf) was not part of the cartographer's original design. In at least one other map, the Laurentian world map of 1351, a divergent outline in ink is superimposed on an original one in colour. The appearance of the gulf in other late-medieval maps (*e.g.* Vesconte, Borgia), and of the name *Sinus Ethiopicus* in Fra Mauro's world map (also drawn at Venice, and with Bianco's help), inclines me to think Mr. Crone's interpretation of this feature and its name, in Bianco's map, unlikely to be correct.

Since each of us is presumably concerned to arrive at the truth, and not to score debating points, I hope that Mr. Crone will bring to any further discussion of this difficult document the qualities of detachment and judgment which we have learnt to expect from him, but which in his review seem to have momentarily failed him. It is a pity that he had no room to notice Mr. George Painter's edition of the *Tartar Relation*, a document of much interest for medieval Asian history.

R. A. SKELTON

London

I DO NOT understand the position which Mr. Skelton takes up in the first paragraph of his letter. It is scarcely scholarly practice to assert a lack of objectivity in a review without advancing unambiguous evidence in support of the charge. By authenticity I mean: "Is the Vinland Map what it is represented to be, *i.e.*, is it a map of Greenland and part of the North American continent as discovered by the Norsemen?" (*Cf.* the *O.E.D.*: "The quality of being authentic, or entitled to acceptance.") I did not "explicitly commit" myself to "modern counterfeiting" (Skelton's phrase) for the simple reason that I do not believe that is the most likely explanation. All I am maintaining is that in my opinion the Vinland Map, as we have it today, is post-Columbian. The purpose of the patronising reference to Professor Eva Taylor in this context eludes me.

The lack of information on the Map's previous history is certainly disconcerting. The probable existence of a particular map or map type, as Mr. Skelton knows, has sometimes been deduced from literary references or later cartographic style. He himself helps to make my point, for the Henricus Martellus map had been prefigured, the Waldseemüller globe gores are a second copy, and other maps of Vesconte Maggiolo were known before this came to light.

None of these cases applies to the Vinland Map.

I do not propose to continue the discussion on whether the *Gronelāda* outline more nearly resembles modern Greenland or South America; this is a side issue. I maintain that the outline is not based on charts resulting from a circumnavigation.

As to the Atlantic islands, I must disclaim having found a "parallel" for one of them; I show how another name had been manufactured. The four names I quoted are not to be found on other maps in precisely these forms and arrangements. (The evidence for this, as I stated, is provided by Mr. Skelton himself.) Concerning the fold in the Bianco

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Map and the southern coast of Africa, I fail to see how the resemblance I point out is at once "a substantial point" and "a very slender thread." Not having personally inspected the Bianco Map, I accept his remark on the colouring of the Southern gulf—but I must point out that there is evidence on contemporary maps for my reconstruction of *nidus animalium*. On the Walspurger Map, for instance, which is almost identical in date, there is a reference in this very position to *mirabilissima monstra*. My review was clearly devoted to the Vinland Map, so that the absence of any reference to Mr. George Painter's work is no reflection whatever on *The Tartar Relation*. I leave appreciation of his work to those qualified to judge.

I certainly do not wish to score "debating points" and I deplore the practice, when discussing the Vinland Map, of indulging in personal attacks on critics.

G. R. Crone

London

Arthur Lewis' Reply

Much of the apparent disagreement of my critics ["Beyond African Dictatorship?", L. Gray Cowan, Keith Kyle, Encounter, February and March] is due to my not having made my purpose clear. Both accuse me of thinking that all that is wrong with West African politics is bad constitutions: adopt proportional representation with coalition governments and all will be well. We can all agree, even without swallowing Mr. Kyle's version of the Congo, that this would be an absurd proposition. However, to say that some kinds of constitution are more appropriate to West African conditions than others (which is a part of my case) is not to deny that no constitution will work if the political parties refuse to tolerate each other. It was I who wrote "we must face the fact that no institutional gimmick can be devised which will automatically make big groups collaborate rather than fight," and referred to Mr. Riker's excellent book on political party strategies.

The emphasis of my article [Encounter, August] was thus not on constitutional gimmicks but on political attitudes. In a society whose chief political problem is pluralism, a war-like attitude is destructive. I was writing only about West Africa, where pluralism is the chief political problem. Other parts of Africa (and of the world) have other problems to which a war-like attitude is appropriate—a handful of people own most of the land, or there is a large industrial proletariat, or the masses are held down in some kind of caste or racist system. In such countries political warfare is inevitable and can be healthy. Analogies from the rest of Africa do not necessarily apply to West Africa, since it is fortunate in not having these problems.

A minority of West African governments nevertheless claim destruction for their objective. They insist that they are "revolutionary," and intend to overturn the existing pattern of society. They have to put politics before everything else and must resort to violence, political suppression, and gaol in order to achieve their objectives. To such groups it is obviously pointless to counsel conciliation, and I was not writing for them. Fortunately, only three of the sixteen governing parties in West Africa—albeit the three whom Western writers are most anxious to defend—fall into this category. The rest of West Africa is content to settle for change by evolution, education, and persuasion.

Unfortunately, even those who do not have revolutionary aims have still inherited from Europe political institutions and ideas framed for class warfare which are destructive in the West African context. The single-party claims merit for having got rid of the institutions, but since it has adhered to the ideas, it is out to "win," and to crush its opponents rather than to make a place for them in the social fabric, which is the only way to deal with pluralism. The break-up of the Congo is an excellent illustration of what happens when men fail to understand that coalition is the sole basis on which a plural society can be held together (though this was not their only problem).

Professor Cowan and I share the same attitudes and objectives. He says that what was lacking in West Africa was consensus. In my book[1] I have examined the party attitudes to economic affairs and foreign policy, and show that (apart from the few "revolutionaries") there was no essential difference in policies between the governing parties and the parties they suppressed. This essential ingredient of democracy *was* present in West Africa. My article has no bearing on countries where consensus on policy is absent.

He further argues that a single-party does not have to behave in a violent manner; it could be democratic and conciliatory, but has instead been corrupted by the cult of personality.

I am as attracted as anybody else to the idea of a democratic single-party, formed by voluntary merger of all other parties, and behaving like an ideal coalition. West African single-parties are not like this, and the reason is inherent in their plural society.

Democracy is easy to achieve in a society which is not sharply divided; my article cites Tanganyika and some northern countries of West Africa as places where single-party democracy might work. The reason given for thinking this to be impossible in the southern parts of West Africa is the big differences in wealth between the various tribes, which must provoke inter-regional strife, except in a federal or near-federal framework. Mr. Kyle retorts (and he could have cited the Ivory Coast) that if the richer groups form and dominate the single-party, they can impose their will on the rest. This is true, but a single-party controlled by richer groups is not likely to be democratic.

If we are talking about countries with big inter-regional differences in wealth, a *democratic* single-party must fall under the control of the poorer regions and must be rent by the strains described in my article. The cult of personality is then no accident; it is an essential part of the mechanism for holding a single-party together in a divided society.

[1] *Politics in West Africa*. Allen & Unwin, 15s.

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London

SOTHEBY'S *last week auctioned, for $12,600, a collection of letters from Rudyard Kipling's parents to his headmaster when the boy was 13. In one, father Kipling, an artist who had worked in India, wrote: "I must confess from what I have seen of Ruddy it is the moral side I dread a breakout on. I don't think he has the stuff to resist temptation. Journalism seems to me especially invented for such desultory souls."*

NEW YORK TIMES

New York

TWO *Harvard biologists have found that American newspapers, magazines, and other paper products contain a substance which shows high "juvenile hormone" activity for certain insects. The hormone precludes normal sexual development for the vulnerable insects. As Dr. Slama and Professor Williams report in their communication to the National Academy, "pieces of American newspapers and journals* (New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Boston Globe, Science, *and* Scientific American) *showed extremely high juvenile hormone activity when placed in contact with* Pyrrhocoris. The Times (*of London*) *and* Nature *were inactive, and so were other paper materials of European or Japanese manufacture.*

THE TIMES

London

FOREIGNERS *are forever bemused by the mystique of the Oxford and Cambridge boat race on the Thames. Even though they may not understand it fully, newspapers all over the world carry reports on it. The most amusing one to date was in an Italian journal which said: "The annual boat race between Putney and Mortlake took place yesterday. The former won."*

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE

London

THE ROLE *of the scholar-journalist is well established in Europe; one has only to think of Raymond Aron and Maurice Duverger in France, Denis Brogan and A. J. P. Taylor in Britain, and Jacques Freymond in Switzerland. In the United States, on the other hand, the term "journalist" is an epithet among social scientists. Although it is permissible to review books, no important academic figure in the United States writes regularly for a newspaper or mass-circulation magazine.*

THE GUARDIAN

London

YOU ARE *an Oxford graduate, awaiting a job and trying to bridge the gap by tutoring. You advertise that you have a "vacancy for pupil. . . ." The answers will come from people who think you are a prostitute catering to those wanting sadistic treatment. It is a code term.*

It seems that this type of advertiser has lately been getting bolder, and more ingenious. The other day the magazine Private Eye *was singled out by a Sunday newspaper for moral reprobation on the ground that it published "small ads" of a shockingly "kinky" kind.*

I found Mr. Peter Usborne, advertising manager of Private Eye, *in some distress and confusion of mind. "All very well to laugh," he said, "but I personally am trying to sell—through our own small-ads—my second-hand motor-bicycle. Now I've taken expert advice and find that 'motor-bike' is a well-known code-word for some perversion or other—don't ask me which."*

In an effort to "clean up" the advertisement columns, Usborne has assembled from lawyers and other experts in the field a daunting list of words and phrases which, if used in a "small ad," mean that the advertiser is sexually off-beat and render the publication liable to prosecution.

All advertisements containing the name of a nationality are to be shunned. No French lessons. No German lessons. And "American" occurring anywhere indicates something quite filthy.

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

Vienna

IN AN INTERVIEW, *Friedrich Torberg, novelist and editor of* Forum, *said: "The intellectual is torn like a schizophrenic between literature and journalism, between indirect influence through novels or direct impact through a magazine's critiques and polemics. Has my own magazine succeeded? Well, in part; at least in the sense of our motto from Lichtenberg—'That one can convince one's opponents with printed arguments is something I haven't believed since the year 1764. That's not the reason for wielding one's pen. It is rather to annoy the others and to give those on our own side some courage and strength'. . . ."*

DIE WELT

London

HE HANDED HIM *over to the Features Editor* [*Peter Forster writes in his new novel*], *who said to him when alone: "What I want to get into the paper is words." His voice shook with feeling. "Yes, Words—that's what I want in this paper! People think because we're a daily we've no use for elegant language—that's all balls. I'll print any words, so long as they're good words, and that's why I want people like your good self writing for us. Educated writers."*

"Have you seen the piece in ENCOUNTER *this month about the percentage of graduates working in Fleet Street?"*

"I haven't had time to read it yet. This job's a killer."

"It's only published today."

"I'll send out for it. Thanks for telling me."

"Let me give you my copy."

"No, I'll send out for it," insisted the Features Editor, irritated that the young man seemed not to know that Features Editors always send out for things.

THE SPIKE (*Hutchinsons*)

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My focus is on societies whose chief problem is pluralism. Such societies can find peace only in conciliation; minorities must be courted, not suppressed. Professor Cowan and I agree that party warfare is inappropriate in these circumstances; some kind of coalition is essential. He believes that the single-party can provide this, if not corrupted by inessentials. I believe that the strains of a divided society cannot be contained within the single-party, and that on the contrary it aggravates them.

It is at least something that both of us are saddened by what is happening and think it unnecessary, while so many other writers about Africans find only reasons why violence is inevitable and good.

W. Arthur Lewis

Princeton University,
Princeton, New Jersey

Marquis de Sade

It was with interest that I read in your February issue of a statement attributed to me by a daily newspaper regarding the publication in paperbacks of books by the Marquis de Sade. The statements attributed to me in that newspaper were inaccurate and a letter from me was subsequently printed correcting them.

These books by de Sade which we have published are serious and literary works. The importance of de Sade in contemporary literature is being increasingly recognised.

In actual fact, far from my considering that these books are not suitable for publication I have subleased paperback rights of our edition of *The Selected Writings of de Sade* to a reputable firm of paperback publishers.

Peter Owen

London

Crisis in All Souls

I, like Dr. Caute [Encounter, March], regret the reversal by All Souls of its decision to take graduate students. But this does not lessen the resentment which I feel at his disclosure of domestic matters and at the public attack which, after enjoying a Fellowship for nearly seven years, he has chosen to launch against the Warden and the College.

Dr. Caute suggests that All Souls does not spend its income. In fact, by its recent elections of Research Fellows the College has for the time being fully committed the whole of its current income. We shall, however, have the necessary funds to pay for the new buildings for Visiting Fellows, and we believe that by the time the money is acquired we shall have a sufficient margin of revenue to finance a worth-while scheme. If the decision of the College had gone the other way, we could in my opinion have financed a worth-while scheme for graduate students—but not the combined All Souls-St. Antony's scheme which Dr. Caute favoured. That in my view was outside the means of the two Colleges and I could not have advised All Souls to go in for it.

H. A. P. Fisher,
Estates Bursar

All Souls College,
Oxford

It was interesting, in your March number, to read the "Column" by R. immediately after Mr. David Caute's "Crisis in All Souls." One could not but wonder whether the same devious talent for inaction would stymie England's chance of joining the Common Market as has already, according to Mr. Caute, stymied that College's efforts at reform.

Anyone who has lived forty years among the English must recall what Bernard Berenson calls the "expression of almost moral disapproval" that comes over an Englishman's face when presented with something new.

Flora Grierson

Woodstock

AUTHORS

Robert Oppenheimer's essay will appear in a volume collecting all the addresses given recently in Washington at the Smithsonian Institution's celebrations. (*The Smithsonian Treasury of Twentieth Century Science,* edited by Webster P. True, Simon & Schuster)....

Paul Fussell is Professor of English at Rutgers University, author of *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form* (1965), and, most recently, of *The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism* (Oxford)....

Henry Gifford, who translated the Sinyavsky essay on Pasternak (with the help of Richard Peace) is the author of *The Novel in Russia* (Hutchinson, 1964). He is Professor of Modern English Literature at Bristol University....

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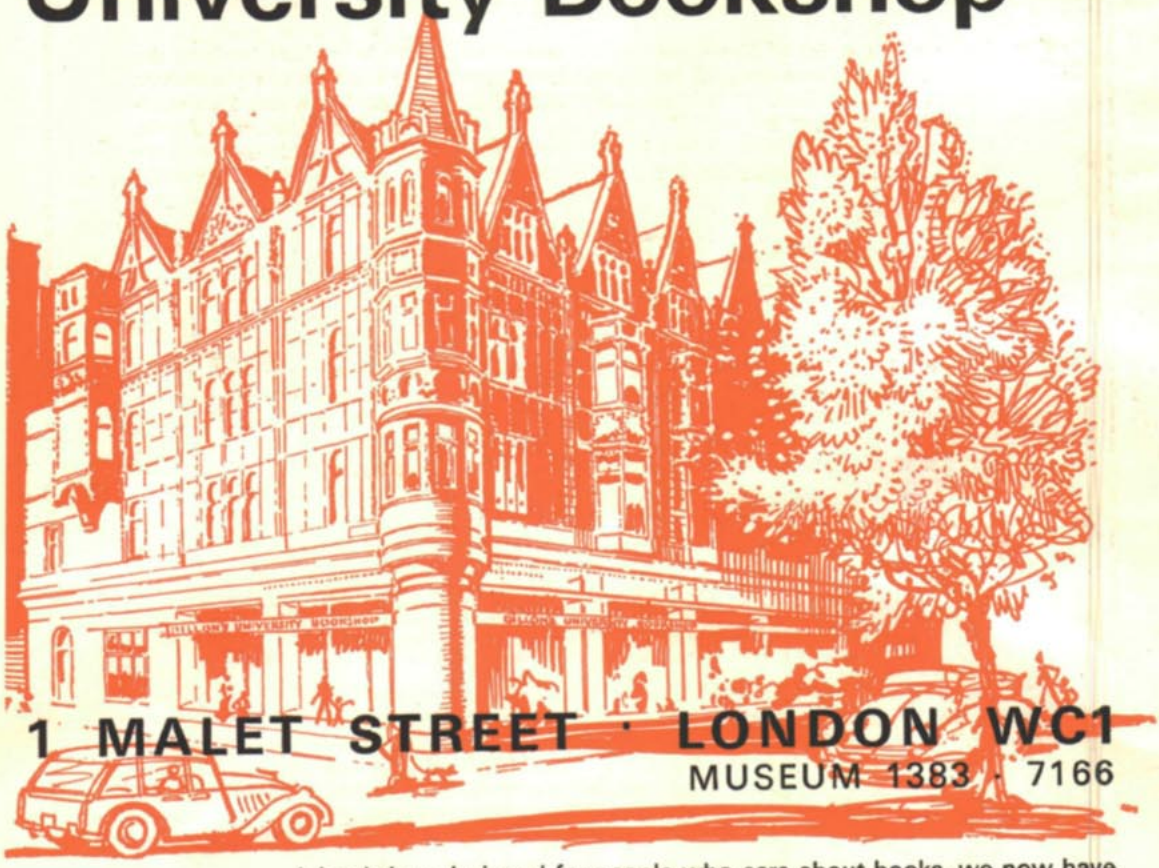

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